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## TN unveils State Education Policy, rejects NEP

**CHENNAI, 8 AUG**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday launched the State Education Policy (SEP), offering a clear alternative to the Centre's National Education Policy (NEP). Drafted by a 14-member panel led by retired Justice Murugesan, the SEP retains the two-language policy, opposes NEET, and rejects public exams for Classes 3, 5, and 8. Undergraduate admissions will be based on Class 11 and 12 marks, not entrance tests. The policy promotes science, AI, and English, and seeks to return education to the state list. BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan criticised the SEP as "egoistic" and "divisive." TN alleges the Centre withheld Rs 2,152 crore over non-implementation of NEP. Udhayanidhi Stalin asserted Tamil Nadu "won't accept imposition." *—PTI*

*>>>More on Page 3*

## IT bill withdrawn, new version to be tabled on 11 Aug

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday withdrew the Income Tax Bill, 2025, from the Lok Sabha. A revised version incorporating key recommendations of the Select Committee will be introduced on 11 August. The bill, initially tabled on 13 February to replace the Income Tax Act, 1961, had been referred to a 31-member Select Committee led by Baijayant Panda. Key suggestions included continuing tax exemptions on anonymous donations to religious-cum-charitable trusts and allowing late TDS refunds without penalties. Sources said the updated bill aims to provide clarity and avoid confusion by integrating all proposed changes. Anonymous donations to purely religious NPOs remain exempt, while mixed-purpose trusts will face taxation. *—PTI*

*>>>More on Page 3*

## SC deletes observations against HC judge

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The Supreme Court on Friday deleted critical remarks against Justice Prashant Kumar of the Allahabad High Court, following intervention by Chief Justice of India B R Gavai. The earlier order had criticised the judge for allowing criminal proceedings in a civil dispute, calling it an abuse of process. The apex court clarified it did not intend to embarrass the judge but acted to uphold judicial integrity. The court had directed the High Court to reassign the case and remove the judge from the criminal roster. However, following CJI's letter, it withdrew the directions.*—PTI*

*>>>More on Page 4*

# India-US arms deal paused? Govt calls report 'fake'

## China welcomes Modi's visit as ties with US sour

**NEW DELHI/ WASHINGTON, 8 AUG**

India has paused plans to procure advanced US weapons and aircraft following President Donald Trump's imposition of steep tariffs on Indian exports, Reuters reported, marking the first concrete sign of strain in bilateral ties in decades.

Although Ministry of Defence issued a statement calling reports of halted talks "false and fabricated", multiple officials confirmed that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's planned visit to Washington — where major defence deals were to be announced — has been cancelled. They said the delay could be temporary, pending clarity on tariffs and future diplomatic direction.

Trump announced an additional 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods on 6 August, citing New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil as aiding Moscow's war efforts. This brought the total duty on Indian exports to 50 per cent, one of the highest rates levied on any US trading partner.

India plans to buy Stryker combat vehicles from the US *PHOTO: US ARMY*

India has been in advanced discussions to acquire Stryker combat vehicles from General Dynamics, Javelin anti-tank missiles from Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, and six Boeing P8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft in a deal worth USD 3.6 billion. However, these discussions are now paused. Trump has ruled out trade talks with India until the tariff issue is resolved. "No, not until we get it resolved," he told reporters at the White House when asked about possible progress in negotiations.

Meanwhile, China has welcomed PM Narendra Modi's visit to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit. *—Agencies*

*>>>More on Pages 3, 6 & 7*

# RaGa says EC shut website in 3 states over 'vote chori'

**BENGALURU, 9 AUG**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has accused the Election Commission (EC) of deliberately shutting down its websites in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar after he raised concerns over alleged voter fraud in Karnataka. He claimed the websites were disabled to prevent public scrutiny of electoral roll data, warning that transparency could "collapse their entire structure".

Speaking at a Vote Adhikar rally in Bengaluru on Friday, Gandhi cited irregularities in the Mahadevapura constituency, alleging "vote chori" involving over 1 lakh votes. He claimed the presence of 11,965 duplicate voters, 40,009 voters with fake or invalid addresses, 10,452 bulk voters, 4,132 with invalid photos, and 33,692 using Form 6 improperly.

Gandhi named two voters, Gurkirat Singh Dang, 27, and Shakun Rani, 71, who he claimed had multiple EPIC numbers. These entries are still visible on the EC's website, he noted.

In response, the EC dismissed the claims as baseless, stating that state websites remain functional and voter rolls are accessible. It challenged Gandhi to submit a signed declaration of the alleged discrepancies or apologise "for his absurd allegations".

AICC Secretary and former Bengaluru Central LS candidate Mansoor Ali Khan looks on as Rahul Gandhi addresses a Congress protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Friday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

> **Those so-called "80 voters at one address"? They are rented chawl residents, house helps, and security guards who had voter IDs made before moving for work. They don't live together. They aren't fraud voters ... Rahul Gandhi is targeting poor migrant workers** —BJP

Chief electoral officers of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar also asked Gandhi to share specific details of wrongful inclusions or exclusions.

The EC reiterated it had not removed electoral rolls, issuing a fact-check post on X to counter misinformation. Gandhi insisted that his oath in Parliament is a sufficient commitment to constitutional duty. *—PTI*

*>>>More on Pages 2 and 3*

## AMID TIFF WITH US, MODI DIALS RUSSIA'S PUTIN

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday, reaffirming their commitment to deepen the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership.

Putin briefed Modi on the ongoing Ukraine conflict, with Modi reiterating India's consistent call for a peaceful resolution. "Had a very good and detailed conversation with my friend President Putin," Modi posted on X.

The leaders also reviewed progress on key bilateral areas. Modi invited Putin to India later this year for the 23rd Annual India-Russia Summit. The Ministry of External Affairs said the invitation was accepted, and dates are being worked out.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, during a recent visit to Moscow, discussed the summit's agenda with Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Shoigu, focusing on defence and energy cooperation. The call came amid growing pressure from US President Donald Trump over India's Russian oil imports. Modi also spoke with Brazilian President Lula da Silva on Thursday, with both agreeing to deepen cooperation in trade, defence, energy, health, and technology. *—PTI*

**FESTIVAL OF PROSPERITY**

Women offer prayers on the occasion of Varamahalakshmi in Bengaluru on Friday. The festival is dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi and all her eight forms *PHOTO: SALAR*

**MASS BURIALS CASE**

## *SC refuses to gag media over Dharmasthala*

**NEW DELHI DHARMASTHALA, 8 AUG**

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to restrain media coverage of the Dharmasthala mass burial case, rejecting a plea by the Dharmasthala Temple secretary seeking a gag order on alleged defamatory content circulating online.

A bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Manmohan directed a trial court in Karnataka to reconsider the plea afresh, emphasising that gag orders are issued only in exceptional cases. The court clarified it was not commenting on the merits of the matter.

The petitioner, Harshendra Kumar D, had moved the apex court alleging around 8,000 YouTube channels were defaming the temple and its managing family. The Karnataka High Court had earlier quashed a Bengaluru civil court's order restraining media from covering the case.

The case concerns allegations of mass murders and illegal burials of women in the temple town of Dharmasthala. On 23 July, the Supreme Court declined to hear another petition challenging a sweeping gag order that had directed nearly 390 media outlets to remove 9,000 reports related to the case.

Meanwhile, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Friday searched a new site in Boliyar, near Dharmasthala, following a tip from an anonymous witness. Forensic experts joined the tightly secured operation. The whistleblower, a former sanitation worker, alleged he buried bodies—some showing signs of sexual assault—between 1995 and 2014. He has since recorded a statement before a magistrate.

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has urged patience, stating a full investigation must precede any conclusions. *—PTI*

# RaGa's 'Vote Adhikar Rally' triggers slugfest

## Narendra Modi is Prime Minister by theft, says Rahul

**BENGALURU, 8 AUG**

Flagging of the 'Vote Adhikar Rally' in City, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi claimed that Narendra Modi is "a Prime Minister with a margin of 25 Lok Sabha seats," and that "if we get the electronic voter data from across the country then we will prove that the Indian Prime Minister is holding the post by theft".

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha posed five questions to the Election Commission.

"Why are you not giving voter lists in digital machine-readable format to the people of India? The next question was, "Why are you destroying video evidence? Why is EC committing massive fraud in the voter lists? The other 2 questions were, "Why is EC threatening Opposition instead of answering our questions? Why is EC behaving like an agent of the BJP?" he asked

> When Manmohan Singh was in the Parliament, Mamata Banerjee raised the issue in the Parliament that thousands of illegal Bangladeshi migrants were added to the voter list in Bihar, for which she was suspended from the Parliament.
>
> -BY Vijayendra, BJP State President

"In the (2024) Lok Sabha election, our alliance won in Maharashtra. But after 4 months, the BJP won the Maharashtra Assembly election," he added. "It was a surprising election result. When we tried to find out, we learnt that 1 crore new voters cast their votes; 1 crore new voters who had never voted in the LS polls voted in the assembly election in Maharashtra The votes of our alliance did not reduce and we got exactly the same number of votes we had in the Lok Sabha election. The new voters went to the BJP in the Assembly election".

Rahul claimed that in State, Congress surveys showed them winning 15 to 16 seats in the Lok Sabha election.

"But we won nine seats. Then we started questioning. Did we really lose elections?" Gandhi said. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge claimed that his 2019 Lok Sabha election defeat from Gulbarga constituency was also a result of fraud.

"I have won over 12 elections in my life except the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, which I lost for the first time," Kharge said. He alleged that the BJP engaged in "bogus voting", securing up to 20,000 votes in each of the five assembly segments under the Gulbarga Lok Sabha seats. "The same thing happened in Goa, Maharashtra and also Manipur."

*—PTI*

AICC General Secretary Rajdeep Singh Surjewala, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

> Neither can you cover up nor can you hide. You will have to face the Opposition one day..... In the last election, Modi and BJP leaders made an assault on the Constitution. I am telling you with conviction and proof that the Lok Sabha election was also stolen. If you attack the Constitution, then it will attack you
>
> -Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

> The Election Commission, meant to protect free and fair polls, is now acting like a branch office of the BJP – enabling electoral malpractice instead of safeguarding the people's mandate.... Narendra Modi..... should resign (as the Prime Minister) immediately
>
> -Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

> BJP has appointed 8,000 party workers as Booth Level Officers (BLOs) through Chilume organisation. We fought and contained the damage. We should have lodged a complaint with the Election Commission then itself but we did not as election disputes have hardly seen the light of the day in this country.
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

## Same data used for caste census: EC

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Countering Rahul Gandhi's claim of voter list manipulation, sources in the Election Commission of India (ECI) pointed out that the State government based the crucial caste census policy on electoral rolls.

The ECI sources said the State government decided on Thursday to use the electoral roll as a base for conducting a caste survey.

"At the same time that Rahul Gandhi was dropping the Atom Bomb on Electoral Rolls, the (State) Congress government vouched for the authenticity of the electoral rolls by basing their most important policy on it," ECI sources said.

"The reason is that in the past, he (Gandhi) has never sent any self-signed letter by himself. Whatever reply we give is to other entities, and every time, he disowns it. For example, he raised the Maharashtra issue on 24 December. Some Advocate writes to us from AICC. Our reply dated 24 Dec 24 is on our website. But Gandhi says that we have never replied," the sources added.

The ECI again demanded that Gandhi should sign a Declaration if he believes his analysis and allegations or true. However, he should apologise to the nation if what he believes is false, they added.

*—ANI*

## Bogus voting was rampant when Cong was at Centre: BJP

**BENGALURU, 8 AUG**

When the Congress was in power at the Centre, bogus voting was common, said Opposition Leader R Ashoka.

"In Padmanabhanagar, I got 57,000 votes, but 20,000 more should have come. However, Muslims were brought from elsewhere and added here," the BJP leader said at a press conference. "The revenue department conducts all elections. When everyone is from the Congress government, how can irregularities happen? In the past, when Congress was in power everywhere, bogus voting was common. They used to carry away ballot boxes. Dacoits like Phoolan Devi ran the show. Rahul Gandhi seems to want that kind of election now."

- Opposition Leader R Ashoka said that he was robbed of 20,000 more voters in the Padmanabhanagar constituency, but the Muslims were brought from elsewhere and added into the rolls

"In some states, Congress leaders have been arrested for fraudulent voting practices. In Bengaluru's Gandhinagar, there are 18 Muslim voters in a single small house. How is it possible for so many voters to be in one house? In Nagavara ward of Sarvagnanagar constituency, the Congress MP received 5,965 more votes than their MLA," he said.

> In the recent Lok Sabha elections in State, Congress appointed Booth Level Agents (BLAs) for every booth. The initial voter list is provided to the BLA, which KPCC President DK Shivakumar appoints. The BLA handles tasks like removing the names of deceased voters and adding new ones. Hasn't Congress done anything wrong?
>
> -R Ashoka, BJP Leader

"How did Congress get so many extra votes? In HBR Layout, the MP got 3,646 more votes than the MLA, and in Kadugon danahalli, 3,432 extra votes were recorded. Who added all these votes? As soon as they lose, they claim the Election Commission is at fault.... Gandhi hasn't dropped a bomb; it's just a dud firecracker."

Similarly, BJP State President BY Vijayendra termed the move a political gimmick.

"Rahul claims that the surveys showed that Congress would win 16 seats but no survey had ever claimed so. Only some fools in Congress would have told Rahul Gandhi that Congress would win 16 seats," he alleged.

*—Agencies*

## Farmer dies by suicide in Hunsur due to debt

**MYSURU, 8 AUG**

A 45-year-old farmer, Venkatesh, tragically took his own life by hanging at his home in Dasanapura, Hunsur taluk in the State, on Friday. According to police reports, Venkatesh accumulated debts of Rs 5.5 lakh from the Krishi Seva Sahakara Sangha in Hangodu and borrowed an additional Rs 10 lakh from a private bank to purchase a tractor. The farmer faced severe losses from his tobacco crops due to excessive rainfall in March, which contributed to his inability to manage his mounting debts. A complaint filed by his relatives at the local police station stated that he could not bear the burden anymore. Officials from the Hunsur rural and revenue departments have investigated the scene, with a case registered and an inquiry currently underway.

*—SALAR NEWS*

## 300 City cops trained on animal cruelty prevention

**BENGALURU, 8 AUG**

Nearly 300 police personnel from various ranks within the City attended a workshop on animal cruelty prevention at the Police Commissioner's office on 7 August, as announced by PETA India. The three-hour sessions also involved officials from the Animal Husbandry Department, focusing on crucial legal frameworks like the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972. "The role of police and animal husbandry officials is vital in keeping animals safe," stated Meet Ashar, PETA India's Legal Advisor. A follow-up training session for local volunteers is set for 9 August, aiming to strengthen knowledge of legal procedures related to animal welfare. This initiative is supported by key figures including Sowmya Reddy and Seemanth Kumar Singh. *—PTI*

The aftermath after a roof collapsed in an anganwadi centre in Aldarthi village in Raichur **PHOTO: SALAR**

## Anganwadi centre roof collapses in Raichur, one injured

**RAICHUR, 8 AUG**

One person was injured when the roof of an anganwadi centre in Aldarthi village of Arakera taluk in Raichur district collapsed on Thursday afternoon.

The incident occurred shortly after the anganwadi centre had opened and the children sent out to play. There were eight children present on the premises, who escaped unhurt.

Mahadevamma, who is a teacher at the anganwadi was sitting at her desk writing a report, when the roof suddenly collapsed. Hearing the sounds, the locals rushed to the centre and admitted the injured teacher the Devadurga Government Hospital. The teacher was later stated to be out of danger.

Speaking to Salar News, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) Madhav Anehoesur said that the centre has 20 children of whom 8 were present on Thursday. "A comprehensive review report of anganwadi school building is being sent to higher authorities," Anehoesur said.

Based on the directions issued by the Women And Child Development Department, the center has been shifted to a new rented building. *—Salar News*

## CEO ordered probe into election fraud charges: DKS

**BENGALURU, 8 AUG**

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday said the State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) V Anbukumar has ordered an investigation into Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegations of election fraud.

Speaking to reporters after a Congress delegation submitted a memorandum to Anbukumar, Shivakumar said he was informed that they (CEO's office) have started their investigation. "I am glad to know this."

"In the first phase, we have asked him to provide information to go into the details of every assembly segment, where such incidents have occurred," he said.

"Even if there are such issues in my constituency (Kanakapura) I will not mind. Action has to be taken against those who engaged in fraud and are guilty of misuse," he added.

Shivakumar added that BJP used private organisation Chilume to manipulate the votes, as he dismissed the saffron party's counter-allegations. Notably, in 2018, BJP MLA NS Nandiesha Reddy said he paid an advance of Rs 18 lakh to various sections of the company.

*—Salar News with Agencies*

## Guv meets with Philippines Prez

**BENGALURU, 8 AUG**

Ferdinand R Marcos Jr., President of the Republic of the Philippines, held a cordial meeting with the State Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot during his official visit to the City, as part of his tour of India. The meeting took place at the Raj Bhavan, where Governor Gehlot extended a warm welcome on behalf of the people of the State and expressed appreciation for the deepening ties between India and the Philippines.

The interaction was described as "cordial and meaningful" and highlighted the shared commitment of both nations to strengthen diplomatic and cultural relations. Attendees included State Deputy Chief Minister, DK Shivakumar, Chief Secretary to Government Shalini Rajneesh, and other dignitaries.

Philippines President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr and State Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot **PHOTO:X@TCGEHLOT**

During his visit, Marcos remarked on the Philippines and India's shared objective to "strengthen the resilience" of the global community. He emphasised the significance of India's role as "Vishwa Bandhu" (World's friend), noting, "When Prime Minister Modi assures the world that India intends to be 'Vishwa Bandhu', the Filipino people feel his and the Indian people's sincerity." *—ANI*

## Man dies after accident due to docs' negligence

**CHINTAMANI, 8 AUG**

High drama unfolded at the Government Hospital in Chintamani around midnight after the death of 65-year-old Papi Reddy, whose family alleged that doctors failed to examine him and instead referred him to a higher centre without proper care or ambulance support.

Reddy, a resident of Hosahudya village in Srinivaspur taluk, was heading to his daughter's house in Chintamani when he was struck by an unidentified vehicle near Marinayakanahalli. Locals alerted emergency services, but no ambulance arrived for over an hour. He was allegedly then taken in a private car to Chintamani hospital, where doctors referred him to Bengaluru, without even checking him. While being transported in a private ambulance, Reddy died near Hoskote and was declared 'brought dead' at Silicon Hospital. The body was returned to Chintamani for post-mortem, prompting relatives to protest and demand action against hospital staff.

Dr Santosh, Administrative Medical Officer, refuted the allegations, stating Reddy was unconscious on arrival and received immediate medical attention. He said both government ambulances were unavailable, and relatives chose to arrange a private one.

*—Salar News*

**DEMAND ACTION**

## *Raichur villagers carry bodies across river for rites*

**YOHAN P HONADDI**
**RAICHUR, 7 AUG**

For the residents of Mukkunda village in the taluk, performing last rites has become a major challenge when the river is flowing. They have to carry bodies across a river to reach their cremation ground.

Most recently, a video circulating on social media shows villagers carrying the body of a deceased elderly woman on a makeshift stretcher (harigolu) and swim across the river

Villagers said that they have appealed multiple times to the government, demanding well-maintained grounds to the cremation ground, and to create alternative facilities, but no action has been taken.

It is a recurring problem: whenever water is released from the Tungabhadra reservoir into the river, a harigolu becomes necessary to reach the cremation ground situated on an island.

Recently, Tungabhadra Dam released a substantial amount of water, approximately 1 lakh cusecs, to maintain balance and prevent further damage to the dam.

This has contributed to the flooding in surrounding areas.

"We have been facing difficulties in performing cremations for decades. The government is ignoring our pleas. The authorities must immediately resolve this issue faced by the villagers," Chandrashekhara Reddy, a resident of Mukkunda, said.

Locals Nagaraj Devaramani and Rudramunitata urged MLA Hampanagouda Badarli to take appropriate action.

Locals carried a woman's body across a river to perform the last rites after excessive water was released from Tungabhadra reservoir **PHOTO: SALAR**

"The village survey number 238/2 has 1.3 acres of land reserved for a cremation ground. Another 2-acre plot has also been identified. However, due to vastu, villagers are unwilling to use that cremation ground," Tahsildar Arun H Desai responded.

*—Salar News*

## Pontiff booked for fake news on *mazaar* at CUK

**KALABURAGI, 8 AUG**

A case has been registered at Narona Police Station in Aland taluk against Siddalinga Swamiji, pontiff of Andola Karuneshwar Mutt and National Honorary President of Sri Rama Sene, for allegedly spreading misinformation regarding an unauthorised grave construction at Central University of Karnataka (CUK) in Kadaganchi.

The issue stems from a claim made by Siddalinga Swamiji that members of the Muslim community were allegedly constructing *mazaars* illegally inside the CUK premises.

SALAR NEWS reported on the issue on 5 August, debunking several media reports.

Siddalinga claimed that a dargah was being built about 10 to 15ft. He alleged that a shed would soon be erected, leading to the construction of a mosque. He demanded that the district administration immediately demolish the dargah, warning that if not done, Sri Rama Sene activists themselves would demolish the site on 10 August.

However, university staff members said the structure in question is a centuries-old dargah , and no new construction *mazaar* was being built.

The FIR states that Siddalinga Swamiji made provocative statements with the intent to disturb peace and communal harmony and to create discord. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

## Kamal Haasan meets PM Narendra Modi

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Superstar Kamal Haasan, also a Rajya Sabha member, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and shared photos of their meeting on social media. In his post, Haasan conveyed that he presented several requests to the Prime Minister, notably urging for the expedited recognition of the ancient site of Keeladi, located near Madurai. He expressed a strong desire for support in showcasing Tamil civilisation's grandeur and the enduring richness of the Tamil language. The 70-year-old star concluded his message with a call for greater cultural recognition. Haasan's latest film, "Thug Life," directed by Mani Ratnam, was released on 5 June, featuring notable actors such as Silambarasan TR and Trisha Krishnan. *—PTI*

## Parl panel urges revising income ceiling for OBCs

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

A parliamentary committee focused on the welfare of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) has stated that revising the creamy layer income ceiling is urgent. The last update, from Rs 6.5 lakh to Rs 8 lakh annually, occurred in 2017, and the panel highlighted the need for timely reviews, given inflation and rising incomes. Chaired by BJP MP Ganesh Singh, the committee noted the existing threshold excludes many eligible families from benefiting from reservations and welfare schemes. While the Ministry of Social Justice has no current proposal to revise this limit, the committee emphasized the importance of determining post equivalence for OBCs. Other recommendations aimed at enhancing the socio-economic status of OBCs were also reiterated. *—PTI*

## Anti-terror operation in J&K enters 8th day

**SRINAGAR, 8 AUG**

The anti-terror operation in Kulgam district has now entered its eighth day, marking one of the longest encounters in Jammu and Kashmir. Security forces are engaged in combating terrorists who are located in a challenging forest region. Senior police officials and Army commanders are overseeing the operation, which continues to see intermittent gunfire. Recently, Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Nalin Prabhat visited the site. Drones and helicopters are being utilised as part of the ongoing efforts. While two terrorists have been killed, seven security personnel have reportedly been injured. Initial combat began a week ago following intelligence leads regarding the terrorists' positions in the area. This operation is a significant one in counter-terrorism efforts. *—PTI*

## CBI should probe phone tapping: Union Minister

**HYDERABAD, 8 AUG**

Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who appeared as a witness before the SIT in the illegal phone tapping case in Telangana, on Friday called for the investigation to be transferred to the CBI. He hit out at former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, claiming that his phone was tapped by following the procedure used for surveillance of Maoist activities. He also alleged that thousands of phones belonging to political leaders, businessmen, advocates, film personalities and even a High Court judge were tapped during the previous BRS rule. The officials involved also monitored the business transactions of businessmen and "blackmailed" them at the behest of ruling party leaders. *—PTI*

# Infiltrators have no right to vote: Shah in Bihar

### 'RJD, Cong trying to protect their vote bank of infiltrators'

**SITAMARHI, 8 AUG**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday slammed opposition parties for objecting to the special intensive revision of the electoral rolls in Bihar, asserting that infiltrators have "no right to vote".

Addressing a public meeting at Punauradham in Sitamarhi district, he alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was "indulging in politics over the SIR exercise" in the state.

Shah said, the RJD and the Congress are opposing the special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar to "protect" its vote bank of "infiltrators from Bangladesh."

Gandhi earlier claimed that over one lakh votes in Karnataka's Mahadevapura assembly constituency were found to be fake, duplicate or bulk voters, with invalid addresses and new voters with misuse of Form 6.

Alleging that a "vote chori model" was being used in many constituencies across the country, Gandhi said that the judiciary needs to get involved in this because "the democracy that we love so much, does not exist anymore"

The special intensive revision is needed to remove from the voters' list names of infiltrators who came illegally from Bangladesh and eat up the jobs on which the youth of Bihar have a legitimate claim, Shah said.

"Our soldiers killed terrorists in their hideouts. But RJD and Congress leaders are opposing Operation Sindoor," he claimed.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah addresses a public meeting, in Sitamarhi in Bihar on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, Jan Suraaj Party founder Prashant Kishor on Friday flagged "serious irregularities" in Bihar's Health Department, a portfolio held by the BJP all through the NDA rule and alleged that the leaders of the saffron party in the state are "more corrupt" than RJD president Lalu Prasad.

Kishor accused Health Minister Mangal Pandey of "quid pro quo" with current state unit chief Dilip Jaiswal.

Kishor alleged that the state Health department had placed an order for '1,200 ambulances' priced at around Rs 28 lakh each, which was almost twice as what states like Odisha and Uttar Pradesh were paying.

He also claimed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, Pandey had purchased a flat in Delhi in his wife's name and Jailswal helped him in the transaction. *—PTI*

**NEW BILL ON 11 AUGUST**

# Nirmala withdraws Income Tax Bill in Lok Sabha

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday withdrew the Income Tax Bill, 2025, in the Lok Sabha, and the government will come out with an updated version of the legislation after incorporating changes suggested by the Select Committee.

A new version of the Income Tax Bill will be introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 11.

The updated version of the I-T Bill will incorporate most of the recommendations of the Select Committee.

The Select Committee recommended several changes like continuing tax exemption on anonymous donations made to religious-cum-charitable trusts, besides allowing taxpayers to claim TDS refund even after the ITR filing due date without paying any penal charges.

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the second time on Friday till 3 pm amid vociferous protests by opposition parties demanding a discussion on the voter roll revision in Bihar.

Opposition members raised slogans like "SIR wapas lo (roll back SIR), SIR pe charcha karo (take up discussion on SIR)" in the House.

Presiding officer Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was in the chair, adjourned the proceedings till 3 pm.

Earlier during the day, five questions and supplementaries were taken up during the Question Hour.

Rajya Sabha proceedings were washed out on Friday as the House was adjourned for the day amid vociferous protests by Opposition members on various issues, including SIR and Congress' charges of vote theft. *—PTI*

# Tariffs on India nat'l security issue: WH

**NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 8 AUG**

The imposition of an additional 25 per cent duty on India is a "national security issue" associated with New Delhi's "abject refusal to stop buying Russian oil", White House Trade Adviser Peter Navarro has said.

The 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India came into effect from 7 August.

The US president also signed an executive order slapping an additional 25 per cent levy on India for New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, bringing the total duties to 50 per cent, among the highest imposed by the US on any country in the world.

Navarro said it is important to understand that the "rationale for the India tariffs is very different from the reciprocal tariffs".

"This was a pure national security issue associated with India's abject refusal to stop buying Russian oil," he said.

Peter Navarro *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

The US sends a lot of dollars overseas to India to buy their products in an "unfair trade environment. India then uses American dollars to buy Russian oil. Russia then uses those American dollars to finance its armaments, to kill Ukrainians. American taxpayers are then made to pay for the weapons that have to defend Ukraine against Russian arms, Navarro said. *—PTI*

# Sign declaration or apologise, says EC

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

A day after Rahul Gandhi alleged vote theft in at least three states, Election Commission sources on Friday said if the Congress leader believes that his allegations against the EC are true, he should have "no problem" in signing the declaration under electoral rules and submit names wrongfully added or removed from voters' list.

However, if Gandhi does not sign the declaration, it would mean he is making "absurd allegations". In which case, he should apologise to the nation, they say.

According to the latest EC bulletin, since 1 August, when the Bihar draft rolls were published, no political party has approached it with a request to add or remove names. Sources in the poll panel on Friday questioned why Rahul has not raised any objections now.

Opposition leader in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi addressing during a protest by the Congress party held at Freedom Park alleging EVM problem in Bengaluru Central Lok Sabha election, in Bengaluru on Friday. *PHOTO: Mohammed Asad*

**'Rahul cutting the branch he is sitting on'**

Meanwhile, the BJP mocked Rahul as a case of someone cutting the branch he is sitting on, and said Congress and its allies won most of their seats where the number of voters had increased. Union minister Bhupender Yadav said institutions such as the armed forces, Parliament or the Election Commission are autonomous.

INDIA bloc MPs protested in the Parliament House complex against the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Bihar electoral rolls and alleged poll rigging that they dubbed as "vote theft". *—PTI*

> **The evidence is in front of them and they have to investigate it. How can they say it is wrong unless they investigate it**
>
> -Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress MP

## EC must answer serious questions: Shashi Tharoor

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

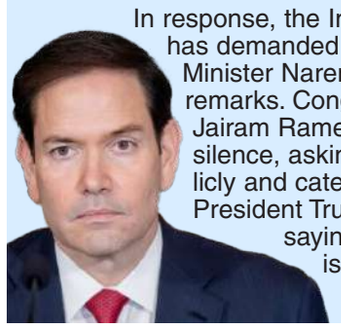
Citing Rahul Gandhi's poll rigging claims, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Friday said these are "serious questions" which must be seriously addressed in the interest of all voters and urged the Election Commission to act urgently. In a post on X, the Thiruvanan thapuram MP said India's democracy is too precious to allow its credibility to be destroyed by incompetence, tampering or carelessness. *—PTI*

## US HELPED SETTLE INDO-PAK CONFLICT, CLAIMS RUBIO

**NEW YORK, 8 AUG**

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has asserted that the US "got involved directly" during the recent military conflict between India and Pakistan, claiming that President Donald Trump facilitated peace between the two nations. Since 10 May, Trump has repeatedly stated that he "helped settle" tensions and offered to enhance trade if hostilities ceased.

Rubio emphasised, "When India and Pakistan went to war, we got involved directly, and the president was able to deliver on that peace." He also highlighted other conflicts where Trump played a role in resolution. Rubio, in an interview to EWTN's 'The World Over' on Thursday, said that Trump is committed to peace and being the "president of peace".



In response, the Indian National Congress has demanded clarification from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over these remarks. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh questioned Modi's silence, asking, "Why doesn't he publicly and categorically deny what President Trump and Mr. Rubio are saying time and again? What is he afraid of?" *—PTI*

## BJP MPs booked for forcibly entering temple

**RANCHI, 8 AUG**

The Jharkhand Police on Friday said it has registered an FIR against BJP MPs Nishikant Dubey, Manoj Tiwari and others for "forcibly" entering the sanctum sanctorum of the Baba Baidyanath Temple in Deoghar on August 2 and hurting religious sentiments.

The FIR was lodged under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita as per a complaint by temple priest Kartik Nath Thakur for "forcibly entering the inner shrine on August 2 between 8.45 pm and 9 pm" despite a restriction on VIP or VVIP entries during the holy month of 'Shravan' in view of a large number of devotees.

The "forcible entry" by the MPs and "scuffle" with policemen resulted in fear among the devotees and a stampede-like situation. *—PTI*

# Tejashwi asked to surrender 'fake' EPIC card by 16 Aug

**PATNA, 8 AUG**

The Election Commission on Friday told RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav that it was a crime to forge and use a bogus government document and set a deadline for him to submit his "apparently fake" Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) by 16 August.

A fresh letter was issued to the Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar assembly by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Patna (Sadar) cum Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for Digha assembly constituency in this regard.

The Official had last week written to the former Deputy CM, urging him to 'hand over for investigation' the voter card which he claimed to possess despite it having been 'not issued officially'.

In the latest letter, the ERO said that a perusal of the voters list for the past several years has led to the conclusion that the EC had never issued the voter card with the EPIC number quoted by Yadav.

Tejashwi Yadav *PHOTO: ANI*

- The Official had written to Tejashwi, urging him to 'hand over for investigation' the voter card which he claimed to possess.

Yadav had in a press conference on 2 August and said that a search conducted with his EPIC number was yielding the result 'no records found' in the draft electoral rolls prepared as part of Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

When the claim was rejected by the District Administration in Patna, Yadav alleged that his EPIC number had been 'changed'. Later, Yadav admitted that he did have the voter ID card with the EPIC number quoted by the officials, but sought to blame them for issuance of two EPIC cards in his favour. *—PTI*

**BILINGUAL EDUCATION POLICY**

# *MK Stalin unveils new education policy*

**CHENNAI, 8 AUG**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin unveiled the state's new education policy on Friday in response to the Centre's NEP that he considers to be against social justice and aimed at 'imposing' Hindi upon the state.

Tamil Nadu, he said, was firm in following the bilingual policy of Tamil and English and the new state education policy has been framed to make the students future-ready and well equipped, the Chief Minister said at the event.

The policy was deep-rooted in the progressive ideals and was aimed at creating students who think and ask questions rather than merely learn by memorising.

Also, it has been proposed to give importance to physical activities, he added.

TN CM MK Stalin launching the state's new education policy in Chennai on Friday *PHOTO: X/Udhayanidhi Stalin*

"Mother tongue Tamil is our identity, our pride. The bilingual policy of Tamil and English will be our firm stand. And I reaffirm this," Stalin said at the event organised by the school education department.

The chief minister gave away certificates of appreciation and laptops to the state government school students who secured admissions in institutes of higher education.

Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi, State Ministers, Chief Secretary N Muruganandam, and senior officials were among those who participated.

There would be no public exam for Class XI and XII, as per the Tamil Nadu SEP - School Education released by the Chief Minister at the Anna Centenary Library, here. Instead of a common entrance test, the policy recommends undergraduate admissions to arts and science streams based on the consolidated marks of classes XI and XII.

The policy is viewed as an alternative to the Centre's National Education Policy.

With this, Tamil Nadu becomes the first state in the country to introduce its own education policy based on the set of recommendations made by a 14-member panel headed by retired Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, D Murugesan. *—PTI*

# Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief's son granted bail

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The Delhi High Court on Friday granted bail to one of the sons of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, while denying the relief to another in a terror funding case.

The court dismissed the bail plea of Salahuddin's son Shahid Yusuf saying the court cannot ignore the larger conspiracy brought forth by the prosecution.

Yusuf was part of the network that used hawala channels to route terror funds into Jammu and Kashmir.

He allegedly received money from co-accused Aijaz Ahmad Bhat alias Aijaz Maqbool Bhat, knowing the funds would be used to further terrorist activities.

Yusuf reportedly travelled on a passport with a falsified parental identity previously and destroyed the document later.

- The court dismissed the bail plea of Shahid Yusuf sayin the court cannot ignore the larger conspiracy brought forth by the prosecution. He received money used in funding terror activities.

There exists a real likelihood of his tampering with evidence and influencing witnesses, the court said.

Shakeel was accused of receiving of money and not for using it for any terrorist activity.

He worked a senior lab technician in the Department of Microbiology at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Soura.

He was granted him bail on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh with two sureties of the like amount. *—PTI*

## Displaced families in Kerala's coasts to get homes

**T'PURAM, 8 AUG**

In a significant move to support coastal families affected by sea erosion and the Vizhinjam International Seaport project, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced the allocation of 348 flats under the Punargeham housing initiative in Thiruvananthapuram. The flats, located in Muttathara and Unnial, Tanur, aim to provide modern, dignified living conditions for families living in coastal areas. The CM stated on X, "Another promise to our fisherfolk fulfilled." The Kerala government's Punargeham scheme focuses on securing housing for families affected by coastal erosion and development projects, with the newly built flats offering essential amenities for a sustainable living environment.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## Vizag cylinder blast victims' kin get Rs 10 lakh

**AMARAVATI, 8 AUG**

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 10 lakh each to the families of three victims who died in a cooking gas cylinder explosion at a welding shop near Visakhapatnam's fishing harbour. The tragic incident occurred on Thursday night, resulting in immediate fatalities. The Chief Minister instructed officials to facilitate the financial assistance to the bereaved families and emphasised the importance of providing comprehensive medical care to those injured in the blast. Three individuals sustained injuries, with two currently in a critical condition. The government is committed to ensuring all necessary support is provided to those affected by this unfortunate incident.—*PTI*

## Banke Bihari temple: SC stays HC order

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed displeasure over the orders passed by Allahabad High Court in a PIL over historic Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan and questioned the use of "intemperate language" against the Uttar Pradesh government. The court perused the high court's order on a PIL challenging the Uttar Pradesh Shri Bankey Bihari Ji Temple Trust Ordinance, 2025 and stayed the observations made in them. The top court also stayed further proceedings before the high court in the petition challenging the ordinance. The counsel for Uttar Pradesh government said that the high court conducted "parallel proceedings" on the issue and made certain "unwarranted observations" in the order.—*PTI*

## 80-yr-old Mumbai man loses ₹9 cr to 4 FB 'friends'

**MUMBAI, 8 AUG**

An 80-year-old man from Mumbai fell victim to a scam, losing nearly Rs 9 crore over two years to four women, who are believed to be the same person. The fraud began in April 2023 when the victim connected with a woman named Sharvi on Facebook, who claimed to require funds for her children's medical expenses. Other women contacted him seeking money too, and one claimed Sharvi had died, pressuring the victim for hospital expenses. By January 2025, he had exhausted his savings and borrowed from his family, leading to his son intervening. The man was later diagnosed with dementia. A cybercrime case was filed on 22 July as probe continues. In a separate incident, two men were arrested in Delhi for operating a fake call centre, defrauding Rs 50 lakh via credit card scams. —*Agencies*

# Why target Air India? SC junks PIL for safety audit

### Petitioner claimed to be a victim of 'unfortunate incident' with AI

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to hear a plea to appoint a retired top court judge for examining Air India's safety practices among other aspects and asked the petitioner why target the airline that witnessed an "unfortunate tragedy".

The court told the petitioner, Narendera Kumar Goswami to withdraw his PIL and move the appropriate forum in case of grievances.

The petitioner claimed to be a victim of "some unfortunate incident" with the airline.

The court said, "We also travel every week and know what is the status. There was a tragedy, a very unfortunate one. This is not a time to run down an airline."

Goswami's PIL sought directions for constituting an independent committee, headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to examine Air India's safety practices, maintenance procedures, and operational protocols, with a report to be submitted within three months.

He also sought a direction for a comprehensive safety audit of Air India's entire fleet by an international aviation safety agency accredited by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), addressing deficiencies identified in the 2024 ICAO audit report, to be completed within six months.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation was sought to be directed to implement and enforce a transparent, publicly accessible reporting system for all aviation safety incidents, including a centralized database and international best practices.

The PIL further sought a direction to Air India to provide compensation to the families of AI-171 crash victims in accordance with the Montreal Convention, 1999, and to offer ex-gratia payments or compensation to passengers of AI-143 for distress and inconvenience caused by the safety incident.

The London-bound Air India flight crashed in Ahmedabad on 12 June, killing 241 people. —*PTI*

**MISUSE OF CRIMINAL LAW**

## SC deletes observation against Allahabad HC judge

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

- SC on 4 August stripped criminal matters of the roster of the Allahabad HC judge "till he demits office" after he "erroneously" upheld summons of criminal nature in a civil dispute

The Supreme Court on Friday deleted its observation in which it criticised Allahabad High Court judge Prashant Kumar for allowing criminal proceedings in a civil dispute case, making it clear that its intention was not to embarrass or cast aspersions on him.

The court reiterated that the observations were made to ensure that the dignity of the judiciary is maintained.

The top court deleted the observations on Chief Justice BR Gavai's request to reconsider the matter.

Acknowledging that Chief Justice of the high court is the master of the roster, the top court left it to him to take call in the matter.

The SC on 4 August stripped criminal matters of the roster of the Allahabad High Court judge "till he demits office" after he "erroneously" upheld summons of criminal nature in a civil dispute.

Meanwhile, a group of judges of the Allahabad High Court had written to Chief Justice Arun Bhansali urging him to convene a full court meeting in response to the SC's order to have Justice Kumar removed from the criminal roster.

The letter, written by Justice Arindam Sinha and signed by seven other judges, expressed pain over the apex court order.

In its order, the top court made strong observations against Justice Kumar's judicial reasoning. The high court administration was asked to remove him from the criminal roster. —*PTI*

**BROTHERS IN ARMS**

Women tie 'rakhis' on the wrists of Rapid Action Force personnel as part of Raksha Bandhan celebrations in Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh on Friday, ahead of the festival which is on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

## Agusta Westland: Christian's plea for release rejected

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

A Delhi court has dismissed the plea of Christian Michel James, an alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland VVIP chopper case, seeking release on the grounds of having served the maximum sentence of seven years.

Special Judge Sanjay Jindal stated, "Considering the allegations under Section 467 (forgery of valuable security), it cannot be said that the accused has already undergone the period of maximum punishment."

The court noted that claims raised by James had been addressed by higher courts, affirming that his request for release under Section 436A of the CrPC was "declined." Michel, extradited from Dubai in December 2018, is in Tihar prison after being granted bail in both CBI and ED cases but failing to provide the necessary bail bonds. —*PTI*

## SC seeks govt's reply on sedition

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine a challenge to the constitutional validity of sedition law, seen as the successor to the colonial-era law, under 2023 Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. SC issued a notice to the Centre on the PIL by retired Major General SG Vombatkere. It called the provision a "rebranded version" of the sedition law. Despite this, the new legislation reinstates sedition under a new label, with even broader and more ambiguous language. The provision was stated to criminalise a conduct carried out "by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or by electronic communication or financial means, or otherwise". —*PTI*

## Minister faces ire over Rapido link to event

**MUMBAI, 8 AUG**

A month after exposing the illegal plying of bike taxis by Rapido in Mumbai, Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik is now facing Opposition criticism after it emerged the aggregator is the lead sponsor for a 'Dahi Handi' event organised by his kin.

Pratap Sarnaik **PHOTO: PTI**

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar accused Sarnaik, an influential Shiv Sean leader from adjoining Thane district, of misusing ministerial post.

The Transport Minister booked a ride using Rapido app to verify a senior government official's claim that illegal bike taxi services were not functional. Pratap Sarnaik booked a ride from Mantralaya to Dadar in central.

When the biker arrived outside Mantralaya, he gave him Rs 500 and counselled him about illegal service. —*PTI*

## ASI STARTS REPAIRS AT ELLORA CAVES

**MUMBAI, 8 AUG**

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has started to repair seepage near 9th-century frescos at the Ellora Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, an official said on Friday.

Seepage was noticed in cave 32, known as Indra Sabha, in the Jain cave complex.

The Ellora cave complex, 30 km from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It consists of a group of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist caves. Excavated in the 9th century, cave 32 is a monolithic shrine, exquisite sculptures and frescos.

"There is a concrete drain above the cave. The seepage at present is away from the paintings and doesn't pose any danger," the official said. —*PTI*

## HC: Indian wife shows strength after desertion

**INDORE, 8 AUG**

The Madhya Pradesh High Court rejected a petition for divorce filed by a man and extolled his wife who continued to live with her in-laws after he abandoned her, and said an "ideal Indian wife" remains rooted in her "dharma".

The court said the wife's conduct reflected the "Hindu ideal of the woman as Shakti - not weak, but submissive and powerful in her endurance and grace."

The petitioner, a constable with Special Armed Force, married in 1998. After a local court rejected his divorce petition on the ground `cruelty', he moved the High Court.

The petitioner's contention that his wife was not ready to fulfil her marital obligation was "falsified by the fact" that they have a son. She accusing him of illicit relations could not be treated as cruelty, given her situation. —*PTI*

# Evacuation underway in U'khand; 566 rescued

**UTTARKASHI, 8 AUG**

A partially damaged road on Gangotri National Highway in the aftermath of the recent flash floods, in Uttarkashi district, Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Efforts to evacuate stranded pilgrims from disaster-hit Dharali village were stepped up on Friday, and 566 more people were rescued safely this morning, officials said.

Rescue and relief operations are being carried out primarily via air as the Gangotri National Highway and several motorable roads are damaged at many places.

On the fourth day of rescue operations, 840 people have been rescued. At least 50 people are still missing, according to rescue officials. The Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority said 16 people are missing.

The district administration said on Tuesday that at least four people have died in the flash floods. But so far only two bodies have been recovered.

A total of 566 people were brought safely to the ITBP's Matli helipad Friday morning, officials said, adding that 300 more people are to be rescued.

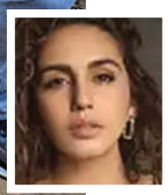
The Maharashtra government is in constant touch with the Uttarakhand administration after 151 tourists from the western state stranded in the Dharali area of Uttarkashi district, officials have said.

So far, 120 of these tourists have been contacted, and they are reported to be safe at an Indo-Tibetan Border Police camp, officials said on Thursday. Maharashtra has requested assistance in locating the remaining 31 tourists and facilitating their return. —*PTI*

**STABBED TO DEATH**

## *Huma Qureshi's cousin killed over parking*

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**



Actor Huma Qureshi and her cousin Asif Qureshi who was killed **PHOTO: PTI**

- A viral CCTV footage showed Asif being dragged and attacked by two men, amid loud cries of help from people nearby

Actor Huma Qureshi's cousin was stabbed to death following a dispute over parking in southeast Delhi's Bhogal area. Two youths have been apprehended in connection with his death.

Asif Qureshi, 42, a resident of Church Lane in Bhogal, sustained a grievous injury to his chest after being attacked with a pointed object during a heated altercation on 7 August.

A viral CCTV footage showed Asif being dragged and attacked by two men, amid loud cries of help from people nearby.

The incident reportedly occurred when Asif confronted a man for parking a scooter in front of his house.

The confrontation escalated and Asif was allegedly attacked with a "poker-type" weapon, inflicting a deep wound in his chest.

Police said the victim collapsed at the spot and was rushed to the National Heart Institute in East of Kailash, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

The police arrested Ujjwal, 19 and Gautam, 18, both brothers hailing from the same locality. Investigations are underway and a case was registered. While Ujjwal has no criminal past, while Gautam was held previously over a fight. The body of the deceased has been sent for post-mortem.

The victim's wife, Shaheen Asif Qureshi, alleged that the murder was premeditated and that the duo had earlier attacked her husband in November, 2024

She said her husband worked as a chicken supplier and rarely interacted with those involved in the killing or their family. Asif's uncle and the father of actor Huma Qureshi, Saleem Qureshi said no one came when the murder happened. The police started the investigation. —*PTI*

## SC stays MP HC order in Saif's property row

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The Supreme Court on Friday granted an interim stay on a Madhya Pradesh High Court order remanding a decades-old property dispute involving the royal estate of Bhopal's last Nawab, Hamidullah Khan, to the trial court for fresh adjudication.

A bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Atul Chandurkar issued notice on a plea of Omar Faruq Ali and Raashid Ali, descendants of the elder brother of Nawab Hamidullah Khan, against the High Court's order of 30 June.

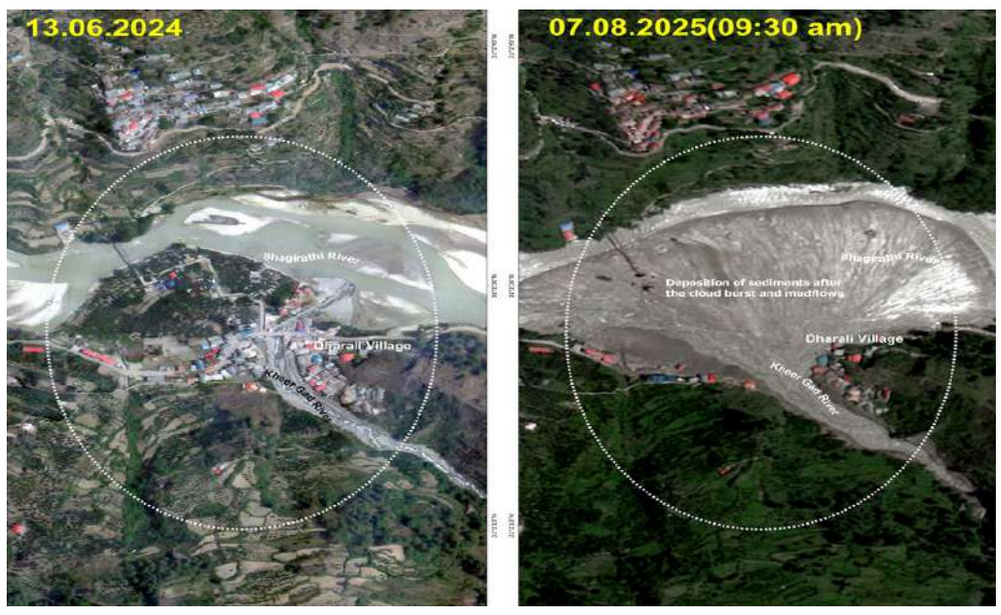
The petitioners have challenged the decision to set aside a 14 February, 2000, trial court judgment that upheld the exclusive rights of Nawab's daughter Sajida Sultan, her son Mansoor Ali Khan (former India cricket captain), and their legal heirs, actor Saif Ali Khan, Soha Ali Khan, Saba Sultan, and veteran actress Sharmila Tagore, over the estate.

The High Court said the trial court's ruling was based on a 1997 Allahabad High Court verdict which was later overturned by the Supreme Court in 2019. It remanded the matter for re-evaluation.

The case has its origins in civil suits filed in 1999 by members of the Nawab's extended family, including the late Begum Suraiya Rashid and her children. The plaintiffs sought partition, possession, and equitable settlement of the estate. —*PTI*

## WIPED OUT

New satellite images from ISRO's Cartosat-2S reveal the massive impact of the Uttarkashi flash floods. Captured on 7 August, the images show a 20-hectare fan-shaped mud and debris deposit at Dharali village, where Kheer Gad stream meets the Bhagirathi river. Several buildings appear submerged or swept away. The flood altered river morphology and widened stream channels. ISRO said the visuals will aid rescue efforts and highlighted the growing vulnerability of Himalayan settlements to such disasters ***PHOTO: PTI***




# Millions may be displaced as Bibi eyes Gaza reoccupation

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is reportedly pushing for the full reoccupation of the Gaza Strip, according to Israeli media. Such a move would mark a dramatic escalation of the nearly 22-month war, drawing fierce opposition both internationally and within Israel.

If implemented, the reoccupation would deepen Israel's global isolation, put the lives of remaining hostages and Palestinian civilians at greater risk, and likely plunge the region into prolonged instability.

Palestinians rush to collect humanitarian aid in Gaza City on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

**An escalation with heavy consequences**

Gaza has already been devastated by nearly two years of war. Experts warn that a full reoccupation would further endanger the civilian population, displace hundreds of thousands more people, and accelerate an unfolding famine.

Israel currently controls roughly 75 per cent of the Gaza Strip. The remaining areas, such as Deir al-Balah and Muwasi, are densely populated and have been designated humanitarian zones. These zones are now home to over a million displaced Palestinians living in makeshift tent camps. Any ground operation in these areas would likely result in more mass displacement, disrupt humanitarian aid, and worsen an already dire humanitarian crisis.

Reoccupation would also endanger the remaining hostages. Of the 251 abducted on 7 October 2023 by Hamas-led militants, only around 50 are believed to remain in captivity. Fewer than half are thought to be alive. Hamas has threatened to execute hostages if Israeli forces advance too close. Recent hostage videos have shown emaciated captives pleading for their lives.

The war has already claimed over 61,000 Palestinian lives, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. While Israel disputes these figures, it has not provided alternative estimates. The Health Ministry, run by medical professionals, is widely viewed as the most reliable source by the United Nations and international organisations.

**Domestic and international resistance**

The reoccupation faces stiff resistance within Israel. Families of hostages see the move as a potential death sentence for their loved ones. Reports also indicate that much of the Israeli security establishment is opposed to an indefinite occupation, which they fear would overextend the army and provoke a long-term insurgency.

Some analysts believe Netanyahu's reoccupation rhetoric may be aimed at pressuring Hamas after internationally mediated talks stalled last month. Others suggest it is a political manoeuvre to solidify support from his far-right coalition partners, who have long advocated for total control over Gaza, resettlement of Jewish communities, and the emigration of Palestinians from the territory.

The decision may ultimately hinge on one key player with leverage over Israel: US President Donald Trump, who has yet to publicly comment on the matter.

**Reoccupation's legal and strategic risks**

If Israel proceeds, it will be expected under international law to meet the basic needs of Gaza's civilian population and maintain order. Past experience suggests this would be a costly and complicated undertaking. The United Nations and many governments already view Gaza as occupied territory, even after Israel's 2005 withdrawal, due to its ongoing control of airspace, borders and population registry.

Unlike in the West Bank, where Israel relies on the Palestinian Authority to manage population centres, Netanyahu has ruled out any PA role in postwar Gaza. He has also failed to present a clear plan for Gaza's future governance or reconstruction. This raises fears of an indefinite Israeli military presence in a territory housing nearly 2 million Palestinians.

The reoccupation could also jeopardise Israel's long-term strategic position. It risks dragging the country into another open-ended conflict in the Middle East, stretching its military resources and fuelling insurgency-style resistance.

**International condemnation**

Israel's conduct in the war has already drawn unprecedented criticism. Even close Western allies have urged an end to the conflict and begun taking steps toward recognising Palestinian statehood. The International Court of Justice is currently reviewing allegations of genocide. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant, citing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the use of starvation as a method of war.

Israel has strongly rejected the allegations, calling them antisemitic and accusing Hamas of endangering civilians by operating in densely populated areas. It insists it takes precautions to minimise civilian harm and blames Hamas for the death toll.

**A looming existential dilemma**

Beyond the immediate military and political consequences, the reoccupation of Gaza could force Israel to confront an existential dilemma. With full control of territory stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, Israel would govern roughly 7 million Jews and 7 million Palestinians.

Most of the latter are denied political rights, including the vote. Human rights organisations have long warned that such a reality amounts to apartheid, a charge Israel strongly denies. However, without a credible path to Palestinian statehood, Israel would find it increasingly difficult to justify continued control over millions of stateless people. *—PTI*

## SALAR

# Panel says no research behind overage vehicle ban

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has admitted it has not conducted any research or study on pollution caused by diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years that form the basis of the overage vehicle ban in Delhi-NCR.

The CAQM shared this in a reply to an RTI application filed by environmentalist Amit Gupta.

The CAQM has not undertaken any pollution research or study regarding the impact of such vehicles, the reply stated.

Asked if there was any other research that formed the basis of the ban, the commission said the restrictions on "end-of-life" (EoL) vehicles stem from the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) order in Vardhman Kaushik vs Union of India & Ors and the Supreme Court's order in M C Mehta vs Union of India & Ors.

Last month, the CAQM put on hold until 31 October the enforcement of its earlier directive that fuel stations in Delhi should not supply petrol or diesel to overage vehicles.

The decision came after the Delhi government cited "operational and infrastructural challenges" in implementing the measure from 1 July.

EoL vehicles include diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years, irrespective of the state they are registered in.

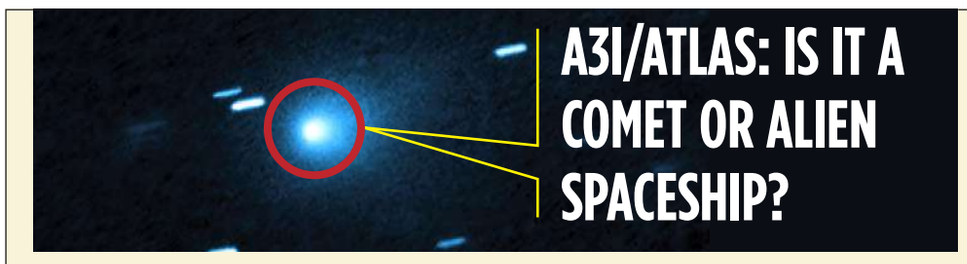
"The fight against pollution cannot be won in a day, it needs proper planning and action. Vehicle pollution is a big reason so is dust but a knee-jerk reaction won't help.

Maximum cities in NCR do not have proper public transport and even in Delhi it's not up to the mark. First, we need to improve public transport and need strong action on dust, construction and industry pollution as well," Gupta said.

According to official data, Delhi has 62 lakh such vehicles, including 41 lakh two-wheelers. Across the NCR, the number is around 44 lakh, mostly concentrated in Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar and Sonipat.

The July order said the fuel ban in Delhi would be launched simultaneously in these five high-vehicle-density NCR districts from 1 November, after installation of Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. The mechanism will be extended to the rest of the NCR districts from 1 April next year. The Delhi government told the CAQM that the ANPR system, meant to identify EoL vehicles by checking number plates against the VAHAN database, was facing software glitches, problems with camera placement, malfunctioning sensors and incomplete integration with neighbouring states' vehicle databases. In the past, the Supreme Court and the NGT have pulled up authorities over poor progress in removing old and polluting vehicles from the NCR despite repeated directions.

The Delhi government has also filed a review application in the apex court. *—PTI*



## A3I/ATLAS: IS IT A COMET OR ALIEN SPACESHIP?

**NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has captured an interstellar comet 3I/ATLAS, from another star system. It is shooting through our solar system at 1,30,000 miles per hour. This is the third interstellar object ever seen.**

**WHY IS IT CALLED 3I/ATLAS?**

Comets are named after their discoverer. In this case, it is the ATLAS survey team. The letter "I" is for "interstellar" and since it is the third known interstellar object, hence the "3" in the name.

The trajectory of interstellar comet 3I/ATLAS as it passes through the solar system
***PHOTO: NASA***

**WHAT IS THIS OBJECT?**

The interstellar 3I/ATLAS was detected 1 July, 2025. Orbiting in a retrograde manner, unusually aligned with Earth. **SIZE:** The upper limit on its diameter is 5.6km, though it could be as small as 1,000 feet across. Astronomers say it has an icy nucleus and coma (a bright cloud of gas and dust, which is why it is categorised as a comet and not an asteroid.

**WHEN SHOULD WE LOOK**

3I/ATLAS should remain visible to ground-based telescopes through September 2025. It will reappear on the other side of the Sun by early December 2025, allowing for renewed observations.

**HOW WAS IT CONFIRMED THAT IT DIDN'T ORIGINATE IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM?**

It is moving too fast to be bound by the Sun's gravity on what is known as a hyperbolic trajectory. It does not follow a closed orbital path around the Sun. It is simply passing through our solar system and will continue its journey into interstellar space, never to be seen again.

**ALIEN SPACESHIP CLAIMS**

Harvard astrophysicist Avi Loeb claims that this could be alien technology. 3I/ATLAS could be a deploying alien probes as it will cross Mars, Jupiter and Venus. This claim is backed by Adam Hibberd and Adam Crowl from Initiative for Interstellar Studies. Some believe 3I/ATLAS is older than our solar system. However, Oxford astronomer Chris Lintott called the theory "nonsense on silts".

**IS IT A THREAT TO EARTH?**

NASA says Comet 3I/ATLAS poses no threat to Earth and the closest it will get is 270 million kilometres. from Initiative for Interstellar Studies. Some believe 3I/ATLAS is older than our solar system. However, Oxford astronomer Chris Lintott called the theory "nonsense on silts".

***RESEARCH: SIDDHARTH SALDANHA***

## LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

# *With only 1 nuke pact left, US-Russia may get into new arms race*

For decades, the threat of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union cast a long shadow over global security. Flashpoints like the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 brought the superpowers perilously close to catastrophe. However, beginning in the 1970s, a series of landmark arms control agreements helped defuse tensions and reduce nuclear stockpiles.

Today, much of that framework has fallen apart.

On Tuesday, Russia announced it would no longer observe self-imposed restrictions on intermediate-range missile deployment. This comes years after the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, originally signed in 1987 by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan. The treaty eliminated an entire category of nuclear-capable missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500km.

The United States withdrew from the INF Treaty in 2019 during President Donald Trump's first term, citing repeated Russian violations, which Moscow denied. The Trump administration also argued that the treaty placed the US at a disadvantage against countries such as China and Iran, which were not bound by the agreement and had amassed more than 1,000 INF-range missiles.

Although the Kremlin initially said it would continue to adhere to the INF's terms, Tuesday's announcement formally ended that commitment. It follows the November 2024 test of Russia's Oreshnik hypersonic missile in Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin has since declared the missile will be deployed to Belarus, a close Russian ally, later this year.

**The last treaty standing: New START**

With the INF now effectively dead, only one bilateral nuclear arms treaty between the US and Russia remains: the New START Treaty, signed in 2010. The treaty limits both nations to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads and includes measures for on-site verification.

However, New START is also on shaky ground. Russia suspended its participation following its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, halting inspections of its nuclear sites. While Moscow says it will still observe the treaty's limits, experts say the agreement is now "functionally dead."

The treaty is due to expire on 5 February 2026, and analysts believe its renewal or replacement is highly unlikely given the current breakdown in US-Russia relations.

United States withdrew from the INF Treaty in 2019 during President Donald Trump's first term, citing repeated violations by Vladimir Putin-led Russia ***PHOTO: PTI***

"New bilateral agreements are highly unlikely at this stage because the trust necessary to negotiate and implement arms control simply doesn't exist," said Sidharth Kaushal, a senior fellow in military sciences at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London.

**History of nuclear arms control**

The push for nuclear restraint began in earnest in 1972, a decade after the Cuban missile crisis, when the US and USSR signed two key treaties. The first was the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks I (SALT I), which capped the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles, bombers, and submarines. The second was the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which restricted missile defence systems to preserve the concept of mutual deterrence.

The INF Treaty of 1987 followed, hailed as a milestone in arms control for banning an entire class of weapons and including rigorous verification procedures. It helped reduce tensions in Europe and marked a turning point in the Cold War.

Further reductions came with the START I treaty in 1991, which dramatically cut both sides' strategic arsenals. Although a START II was signed, it never entered into force. In 2002, President George W. Bush pulled the US out of the ABM Treaty, citing the need to develop missile defences in the post-9/11 era against threats from states such as Iran and North Korea.

Russia strongly opposed this move, arguing that it compromised its nuclear deterrent by allowing the US to build a defensive shield that could neutralise a retaliatory strike.

**Stockpiles shrinking, but still vast**

The good news is that nuclear arsenals have shrunk significantly since the Cold War peak. In 1986, the Soviet Union had over 40,000 nuclear warheads, and the US more than 20,000, according to the Federation of American Scientists.

By March 2025, the federation estimated Russia held 5,459 nuclear warheads (both deployed and non-deployed), while the US had 5,177. Combined, these account for around 87 percent of the world's nuclear weapons.

Still, experts caution that the reduction in numbers does not necessarily reduce the threat. The breakdown of arms control frameworks and the erosion of trust between the US and Russia increases the risk of miscalculation.

"The end of these agreements does not necessarily make nuclear war more likely, but it certainly doesn't make it less likely," said Alexander Bollfrass, an arms control expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

**The global context: China and others**

Arms control efforts are also complicated by the rise of new nuclear powers and regional missile threats. The Bush and Trump administrations cited the lack of constraints on countries like China, Iran, and North Korea as partial justification for pulling out of treaties with Russia.

China, in particular, is rapidly building up its nuclear arsenal and could soon become a nuclear peer to both the US and Russia. Kaushal warned this could trigger a "competitive spiral," prompting Washington to increase both its nuclear and conventional weapons to maintain strategic balance.

That, in turn, could lead Moscow to respond with its own build-up, reversing decades of arms reductions.

"Any increase in US intermediate- or long-range weapons could force Russia to do the same," Kaushal said. *—PTI*

## Putin-Trump meeting may take place on 11 August

**MOSCOW, 8 AUG**

A meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US counterpart Donald Trump may be held on 11 August potentially in Rome, Fox News reported citing sources. But a source told Russian news agency TASS that Rome as a venue was out of the question. On 7 August, Russian Presidential Aide Yury Ushakov said that Moscow and Washington had agreed on a meeting between the leaders in the coming days. The sides are shooting for next week for the sit-down, but the exact date of the summit will be determined based on the results of the preparations. The summit plan came in the wake of an 6 August visit by Special US Envoy Steven Witkoff to Moscow, where he talked to the Russian leader for about three hours. *—TASS*

## Cambodia PM nominates Trump for Nobel Prize

**CAMBODIA, 8 AUG**

Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet has nominated US President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, commending his "extraordinary statesmanship" for mediating a border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand. In a Facebook post, Hun Manet described Trump's July 26 phone call to both nations' leaders as instrumental in "de-escalating tensions in some of the world's most volatile regions." This intervention "averted a potentially devastating conflict," he noted, resulting in a ceasefire agreement reached on 28 July. The five-day clash resulted in 43 deaths and displaced over 300,000 people. The nomination follows a similar recommendation by Pakistan and a nomination from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Man charged with murder of Indian student in Canada

**OTTAWA, 8 AUG**

Authorities have arrested 32-year-old Jerdaine Foster and charged him with first-degree murder following the tragic death of 21-year-old Indian student Harsimrat Randhawa in Canada. Foster, apprehended at Niagara Falls in Ontario, also faces three counts of attempted murder, as confirmed by Acting Det-Sgt Daryl Reid. Randhawa, a second-year physiotherapy student at Mohawk College, was fatally struck by a stray bullet while waiting at a bus stop on 17 April . Reid reported to have described her as an innocent bystander...simply trying to make her way home from a local gym when she was struck and killed. The investigation, which involves multiple vehicles and individuals, is ongoing. No further arrests have been made. *—PTI*

## Haiti gets new govt as gangs threaten coup

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, 8 AUG**

A wealthy businessman on Thursday became the head of Haiti's transitional Presidential Council. Laurent Saint-Cyr's appointment at the council's heavily guarded office in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where criminal gangs control 90 per cent of the neighbourhoods, marked the first time that members of Haiti's private sector serve in both the rotating Presidency and the post of Prime Minister. Saint-Cyr had his start at a local insurance company while Haiti's current Prime Minister once ran an internet firm. Hours earlier, a powerful gang federation that has long denounced Haiti's oligarchs threatened to overthrow the government, and gunfire erupted in parts of the capital. *—PTI*

# Federal officers to now 'guard' DC

## Govt calls DC worse than Baghdad after Musk's protégé beaten; Prez says 'make DC safe again'

**WASHINGTON, 8 AUG**

The White House said Thursday night that there will be increased presence of federal law enforcement in the nation's capital to combat crime for at least the next week, as President Donald Trump's suggestions that his administration could fully take over running the city.

"Washington, DC is an amazing city, but it has been plagued by violent crime for far too long," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said. She added that the increased federal presence means "there will be no safe harbour for violent criminals in DC."

Trump's order comes after Edward "Big Balls" Coristine, a high member of the Department of Government Efficiency, was assaulted by a group of teenagers in an attempted carjacking.

"If DC doesn't get its act together, and quickly, we will have no choice but to take Federal control of the City, and run this City how it should be run," Trump posted on Truth Social. He subsequently said he was considering repealing Washington's limited Home Rule autonomy or "bringing in the National Guard, maybe very quickly."

"It is more violent than Baghdad. It is more violent than parts of Ethiopia, parts of many of the most dangerous places in the world," White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller told press.

US President Donald Trump threatened to take control of the city and bring in the National Guard *PHOTO: TRUTHSOCIAL@WHITEHOUSE*

**PEACE DEAL WITH ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN**

Leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan are expected to sign a peace deal Friday at the White House that could potentially put an end to decades of conflict, Trump said.

Trump said Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev would also be signing agreements with the US to "pursue Economic opportunities together, so we can fully unlock the potential of the South Caucasus Region."

The agreement could put an end to decades of conflict.

Three US officials said the agreements included a major breakthrough establishing a key transit corridor across the region, which had been a hang-up in peace talks. The agreement, according to the officials, would give the US leasing rights to develop the corridor and name it the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity.

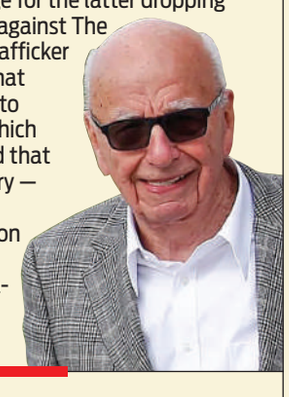
**COLLEGES MUST PROVIDE 'RACE DATA'**

Trump plans to sign an executive order requiring colleges to submit data to prove they do not consider race in admissions, according to a fact sheet shared by the White House ahead of the Thursday signing.

It is similar to parts of recent settlement agreements the administration negotiated with Brown University and Columbia University, restoring their federal research funding. The universities agreed to give the government data on the race, grade point average and standardised test scores of applicants and students. *—PTI*

### Murdoch to send Don health updates

Trump and 94-year-old Rupert Murdoch have struck a deal; the media tycoon is to send "regularly scheduled (health) updates" to the President in exchange for the latter dropping the expedited USD 10 billion lawsuit against The Wall Street Journal's article on sex-trafficker Jefferey Epstein. The WSJ reported that Trump wrote sexually explicit letters to Epstein. The agreement, details of which were filed in court Monday night, said that neither side would engage in discovery — including depositions — until a judge decides whether to dismiss the case on legal grounds. The agreement also requires Murdoch to provide a mechanism for alerting Trump "if there is a material change in his health."



### Trump nominates Miran to Fed Reserve

Trump said he will nominate his top economic adviser to the Federal Reserve's board of governors for four months, temporarily filling a vacancy. Trump said he has named Stephen Miran, the Chair of the White House's Council of Economic Advisers, to fill a seat vacated by governor Adriana Kugler. Miran, if approved by the Senate, will serve until 31 January, 2026 and will likely allow Trump to slash reserve rates, something Trump has been gunning for.

### EPA cancels $7B grant for solar energy

The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday terminated a USD 7 billion grant programme intended to help pay for residential solar projects for more than 900,000 lower-income US households. The funding, part of the Biden-era's Solar for All programme, was awarded to 60 recipients including states, tribes and regions for investments such as rooftop solar and community solar gardens.

### Retirement savings can go into crypto

Millions of Americans saving for retirement through 401(k) accounts could have the option of putting their money in higher-risk private equity and cryptocurrency investments, according to an executive order signed by Trump that could give those financial players long-sought access to a pool of funds worth trillions.

### 6 Jan riots: FBI sacks more leaders

The FBI is forcing out more senior officials, including a former acting director who resisted Trump administration demands to turn over the names of agents who participated in 6 January Capitol riot investigations and the head of the bureau's Washington field office.

### Intel CEO responds to Trump's threat

Intel's CEO, Lip-Bu Tan responded to Trump's demand for his "immediate resignation", saying the President's criticism of his Chinese investments was "misinformation". In an internal company memo, he said, "The US has been my home for more than 40 years."

# USD 50M reward for Venezuela's Prez

**WASHINGTON, 8 AUG**

The Trump administration is doubling to USD 50 million a reward for the arrest of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro, accusing him of being one of the world's largest narco-traffickers and working with cartels to flood the US with fentanyl-laced cocaine. "Under President Trump's leadership, Maduro will not escape justice and he will be held accountable for his despicable crimes," Attorney General Pam Bondi said on Thursday.

Maduro was indicted in Manhattan federal court in 2020, during the first Trump Presidency, along with several close allies on federal charges of narco-terrorism and conspiracy to import cocaine. At the time, the US offered a USD 15 million reward for his arrest. That was later raised by the Biden administration to USD 25 million — the same amount the US offered for the capture of Osama bin Laden following the 11 September, 2001, attacks.

Despite the big bounty, Maduro remains entrenched after defying the US, the EU and several Latin American governments who condemned his 2024 reelection as a sham and recognised his opponent as Venezuela's duly elected President. *—PTI*

# River level raised for Vance's b'day bash

**COLUMBUS, 8 AUG**

Vice President JD Vance's security detail had an Ohio river's water level raised last week to accommodate a kayaking trip he and his family took to celebrate his 41st birthday.

The US Secret Service said it requested the increased waterflow for the Little Miami River, first reported by The Guardian, to ensure motorised watercraft and emergency personnel "could operate safely" while protecting the Republican Vice President, whose home is in Cincinnati.

The US Army Corps of Engineers said its Louisville District temporarily increased outflows from the Caesar Creek Lake in southwest Ohio into the Little Miami "to support safe navigation of US Secret Service personnel."

They said the move met operational criteria and fell within normal practice.

"It was determined that the operations would not adversely affect downstream or upstream water levels," the corps said in a statement. "Downstream stakeholders were notified in advance of the slight outflow increase, which occurred 1 August, 2025."

Vance's birthday was on 2 August. *—PTI*

**REIGNITING ALLIANCE**

# China hits back at Philippines on Taiwan

2 Japanese warships visited New Zealand's capital for first time in almost 90 years. This comes after Mitsubishi was contracted to build Australian warships *PHOTO: X*

**BEIJING, 8 AUG**

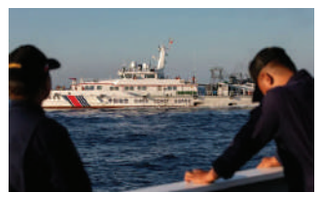
China strongly criticised Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr after he suggested his country would be drawn into a potential conflict between China and the US over Taiwan.

During a visit to India earlier this week, Marcos said the Philippines' geographic proximity and the large Filipino community in Taiwan meant the country would be forced to get involved in the event of war.

"If there is an all-out war, then we will be drawn into it," Marcos said. "There are many, many Filipino nationals in Taiwan and that would be immediately a humanitarian problem."

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned Manila not to "play with fire"

"Geographical proximity and large overseas populations are not excuses for interfering in others' internal affairs," it said in a statement. "We urge the Philippines to earnestly adhere to the one-China principle ... and refrain from playing with fire."



Philippine Coast Guard look at China Coast Guard ship *PHOTO: X*

"We ask the Philippines to stop its provocations and hypes, and stop ganging up with others to stir up troubles in the South China Sea," Jiang Bin, China's Ministry of National Defence spokesperson said in response to the India-Philippines joint naval exercises.

China also ramped up its naval exercises in the South China Sea. It conducted "routine patrols" from Friday to Monday, aimed at countering what Beijing described as "provocative actions" by Manila and unnamed "non-regional countries." *—Agencies*

## Israel's Security Cabinet approves Gaza military control plan

**JERUSALEM, 8 AUG**

Israel's Security Cabinet has approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial plan to take military control of Gaza City, primarily aimed at "disarming" Hamas.

Netanyahu's office stated that a "decisive majority" of ministers favoured this plan, which encapsulates five principles: disarming Hamas, returning hostages, demilitarising Gaza, establishing Israeli security control, and forming a transitional civil administration.

Netanyahu asserted, "Our goal is to destroy Hamas and get our hostages back."

Meanwhile, Israeli airstrikes kill at least six in eastern Lebanon, as the government flouted the ceasefire with Hezbollah. *—Agencies*

## 17 killed, 33 missing in Chinese floods

**BEIJING, 8 AUG**

At least 17 people have died and 33 others are missing in torrents and landslides in China in the last 48 hours, official media here reported on Friday.

President Xi Jinping has urged all-out search and rescue efforts, and flood prevention and disaster relief work after mountain torrents hit northwest Gansu province on Thursday, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Friday.

At least 10 people were killed and 33 others listed missing in mountain torrents in Gansu province, it said.

In another incident, seven people died and seven others injured following a rain-triggered landslide in Guangzhou, the capital of China's southern Guangdong province, on Wednesday, officials said.

More than 2,700 rescue personnel have been dispatched by provincial authorities, along with 980 vehicles and pieces of machinery and 8,530 sets of emergency supplies.

Several provinces in China, including Beijing, are currently experiencing heavy rains and floods. Forty-four people were killed and nine went missing in rain-triggered floods in Beijing two weeks ago. *—PTI*

**'HOGS GET SLAUGHTERED'**

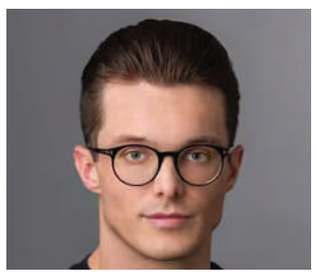
# *LA tech CEO receives pig head in hate mail over AI-realty deal talk*

**LAS VEGAS, 8 AUG**

A Las Vegas tech CEO received a bloodied head of a pig and a threatening letter after his firm threatened to upend the "traditional brokerage" business in the city's real estate. Blake Owens, founder and CEO of Agrippa, said he received the package following his interview about using AI for a real estate deal.

"Perhaps this person watched too much of The Godfather," the Agrippa founder Owens told KLAS 8 News Now. "Needless to say, I still take it very seriously, but don't feel like I'm being truly threatened. It was a message".

The letter labelled him a "Clark Kent knockoff".



Blake Owens *PHOTO: LINKEDIN/BLAKE J. OWENS*

"A simple Google Search goes a long way these days, especially in Vegas. Saw your Marcus video, what a joke. 'AI' is not going to replace brokers. Clearly you don't understand real estate wasn't built by developers or investors," the letter read. "And it sure as hell wasn't built by tech guys in lululemon. It was built by brokers. We did it the hard way. No shortcuts, no tech, just people. So enjoy your moment while it lasts. And don't get greedy because pigs get fat and hogs get slaughtered."

The letter was signed off with "M".

Owens believes that the letter was sent by someone worried about being replaced by AI. "I understand this person is probably just frustrated that business isn't going well for them". *—Agencies*

## Man's body found fully intact 28 years later in Pak glaciers

**LAHORE, 8 AUG**

The body of a man who went missing 28 years ago was found well-preserved and fully clothed in a glacier in remote norther Pakistan. According to the BBC, Naseeruddin had been travelling with his family in 1997 to escape a violent feud when he vanished.

On 31 July, locals in the Kohistan region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa spotted the preserved body near the edge of the shrinking Lady Meadows glacier. An identity card found confirmed it was Naseeruddin.

"What I saw was unbelievable. The body was intact. The clothes were not even torn," Omar Khan, a local shepherd who found the remains, told BBC Urdu.

According to police, Naseeruddin fell into a glacier crevice during a snowstorm in June 1997 and went missing.

Police found that Naseeruddin disappeared in the mountains of Kohistan region in 1997 June *PHOTO: X/@GROUNDCHECK360*

Naseeruddin, a husband and father of two, was travelling on horseback with his brother Kathiruddin in 1997 when he fell into a crevasse.

The brothers had fled to the mountains to escape a village dispute.

The Kohistan region in northern Pakistan, near the Afghanistan border, once experienced consistent snowfall. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

## Jio Studio films bagged Rs 1,000 cr in FY25

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Jio Studios' total Net Box Office Collection (NBOC) has surpassed the Rs 1,000 crore level in India during FY25, according to the latest annual report of Reliance Industries.

In the year-ago period, the films produced by the media and content arm of Reliance Billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led company garnered Rs 700 crore at the box office. Terming FY25 as a "landmark year", Jio Studio further strengthens its market leadership in Indian entertainment with a robust slate of over 40 films and web originals spanning multiple languages and platforms.The three Jio Studio films are - 'Stree 2', 'Singham Again' and 'Sky Force'. Moreover, 'Stree 2' emerged as the highest-grossing Hindi film of all time, it said. *—PTI*

## Rupee falls 13P to close at 87.71 against USD

**MUMBAI, 8 AUGUST**

The rupee weakened by 13 paise to close at 87.71 against the US dollar on Friday, pressured by weak domestic equities and rising India-US trade tensions.

Forex traders cited sustained FII outflows, market volatility, and uncertainty over the US-India trade deal as key factors. President Donald Trump's move to impose 50 per cent tariffs on Indian imports, effective 27 August, further dented sentiment. The rupee opened at 87.56 and moved between 87.52–87.75 during the session. On Thursday, it had closed at 87.58.

Analysts said a recovering US dollar, falling equities, and trade war fears are weighing on the rupee, though soft crude oil prices and a weaker dollar index offered some support.*—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

## Zomato ropes in SRK as brand ambassador

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Online food delivery platform Zomato on Friday said it has roped in Shah Rukh Khan as its brand ambassador. Khan had recently appeared in Zomato's latest campaign 'Fuel Your Hustle', which celebrates the quiet grind behind some of India's most celebrated names, Zomato said. "Through the campaign and this association, Zomato aims to resonate with every individual who truly believes in hard work and consistency and reinforce its commitment to supporting their journey with food," it added. Zomato Marketing Head Sahibjeet Singh Sawhney said, "His influence transcends generations and borders and is a reminder for India to keep at it."*—PTI*

## LIC shares jump 5 per cent post Q1 earnings

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Shares of insurance behemoth LIC on Friday jumped nearly 5 per cent after the firm reported a 5 per cent rise in net profit in the first quarter and exuded confidence of a double-digit growth in the bottom line in the current financial year.

The stock climbed 4.69 per cent to Rs 927 on the BSE. At the NSE, it went up by 4.75 per cent to Rs 927.10.

LIC on Thursday reported a net of Rs 10,987 crore for the first quarter and exuded confidence of a double-digit growth in the bottom line in the current fiscal.

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) reported a net profit of Rs 10,461 crore in the first quarter of 2024-25.*—PTI*

# GDP may drop to 6% due to US' 50% tariff: Moody's

### It says India has sufficient foreign reserves to manage 'shocks'

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

India's GDP growth could dip to 6 per cent in FY26 if the US enforces a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods from 27 August, Moody's Ratings said on Friday. The potential slowdown of 30 basis points from the current 6.3 per cent forecast would stem from reduced export competitiveness, with the US currently being India's largest export market.

The US announced on 6 August an additional 25 per cent duty on all Indian imports, doubling the total tariff to 50 per cent. The White House stated this was in response to India's continued purchase of Russian oil despite Western sanctions.

However, Moody's noted that strong domestic demand and the robust services sector would help cushion the impact. India's policy response to the tariffs will be key in determining the broader effects on growth, inflation, and the external account.

US announced on 6 August an additional 25 per cent duty on all Indian imports, doubling the tariff to 50 per cent.

Moody's noted that strong domestic demand and the robust services sector would help cushion the impact *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

India has sharply increased Russian crude imports since 2022 — from USD 2.8 billion in 2021 to USD 56.8 billion in 2024 — benefitting from discounted prices, which helped contain inflation and shield the current account deficit.

The 50 per cent US tariff rate far exceeds the 15–20 per cent imposed on other Asia-Pacific nations. Moody's warned that if such a disparity persists beyond 2025, it could undermine India's manufacturing ambitions, especially in high-value sectors like electronics, and potentially reverse recent investment gains.

India and the US are currently negotiating a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) aiming to boost bilateral trade from USD 191 billion to USD 500 billion by 2030. The sixth round of talks begins on August 25, with hopes of concluding a first-phase deal by autumn.

Moody's said India retains sufficient foreign exchange reserves to manage external shocks and expects the government to maintain a gradual fiscal consolidation path despite potential economic headwinds. *—PTI*

**FIIs OFFLOAD RS 4.9K CR**

# Sensex dives 765 points, Nifty drops to 24,363.30 level

**MUMBAI, 8 AUG**

PHOTO: PTI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled on Friday amid non-stop foreign fund outflows and tariff-related jitters.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 765.47 points or 0.95 per cent to settle at 79,857.79. During the day, it tumbled 847.42 points or 1.05 per cent to 79,775.84.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 232.85 points or 0.95 per cent to 24,363.30.

From the Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank and Reliance Industries were among the laggards.

However, NTPC, Titan, Trent, ITC and Bajaj Finserv were the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,997.19 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DII), however, bought stocks worth Rs 10,864.04 crore in the previous trade.

The initial 25 per cent tariffs announced by the US on Indian imports came into effect Thursday.

In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled in positive territory, while South Korea's Kospi, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

European markets were trading mostly in the green. *—PTI*

# Amazon, Walmart, Target halt Indian orders amid tariffs

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Major US retailers, including Walmart, Amazon, Target and Gap, have suspended orders from India following President Donald Trump's decision to impose a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, NDTV Profit reported, citing sources.

The move has dealt a significant blow to India's textile and apparel industry, which counts the US as its largest export destination. In FY25, the US accounted for 28 per cent of India's $36.61 billion textile and apparel exports.

Exporters have reportedly received emails and letters from US buyers instructing them to halt shipments until further notice. These buyers are unwilling to absorb the higher costs and are pressuring Indian exporters to bear the increased burden.

The new tariffs, expected to raise costs by 30–35 per cent could slash US-bound orders by 40–50 per cent potentially causing losses of $4–5 billion, industry sources warned.

Top exporters such as Welspun Living, Gokaldas Exports, Indo Count, and Trident—who derive 40–70 per cent of their revenue from the US—are facing the brunt. Exporters fear losing market share to Bangladesh and Vietnam, where tariffs remain at a lower 20 per cent.

Some exporters are considering offering discounts to clear inventory and soften the blow.

India is currently the world's sixth-largest textile and apparel exporter. *—Agencies*

## No word from govt on Russian oil: HPCL Chief

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The Indian government has neither directed its oil companies to halt nor continue the purchase of Russian oil, instead allowing them the freedom to make procurement decisions purely based on economic considerations, HPCL's chairman said on Friday.

The import of Russian crude oil made up for just 13.2 per cent of all the crude oil that Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) processed into fuels like petrol and diesel in the April-June quarter, and a complete stoppage of oil from Moscow will not have any "significant" impact, HPCL chairman Vikas Kaushal said at an investor call.

There is "no guidance or direction from the government to either stop or (continue) importing" Russian oil, Kaushal said. "We are free to do" imports based on purely commercial merits, he said.

India was the largest importer of Russian crude, purchasing 1.6 million barrels per day in July. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

# Oil firms get Rs 30K cr relief for LPG losses

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved Rs 30,000 crore LPG subsidy to state-run oil companies – Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) – to compensate for losses incurred from selling LPG at below cost over the past 15 months.

The compensation to oil marketing companies (OMCs) will be paid in 12 tranches, as per an official statement.

The international prices of LPG were at high levels during 2024-25 and continue to remain high. However, to insulate consumers from fluctuations in international LPG prices, the increase in cost was not passed on to consumers of domestic LPG, leading to significant losses for the three OMCs.

Despite the losses, public sector oil marketing companies have ensured continuous supplies of domestic LPG in the country at affordable prices.

"The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved compensation amounting to Rs 30,000 crore to the three Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, BPCL & HPCL) for the under-recoveries incurred on sale of domestic LPG," the statement said.

This compensation will allow OMCs to continue meeting critical requirements such as crude and LPG procurement, servicing of debt and sustaining capital expenditure, thereby ensuring uninterrupted supply of LPG cylinders. *—PTI*

## Gold hits new record high of Rs 1,03,420/10g

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Gold prices surged by Rs 800 to an all-time high of Rs 1,03,420 per 10g in the national capital on Friday, driven by continued stockist buying and global market volatility, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity rose Rs 3,600 in the previous session to close at Rs 1,02,620. Meanwhile, 99.5% purity gold also climbed Rs 800 to Rs 1,03,000 per 10 grams, inclusive of taxes. Over the past five sessions, prices have jumped Rs 5,800.

The sharp rise follows the US imposition of a 39% tariff on 1 kg and 100-ounce gold bars imported from Switzerland, disrupting a key supply chain. "This move created supply-side uncertainty and reignited safe-haven demand for gold amid geopolitical tensions," said Chintan Mehta, CEO, Abans Financial Services. Silver prices also rallied, gaining Rs 1,000 to hit Rs 1,15,000 per kg. The metal has increased Rs 5,500 in five sessions.

Analysts cite concerns over global growth and expectations of US Federal Reserve rate cuts by September as major factors. MCX October gold futures rose Rs 782 to Rs 1,02,250, while December contracts hit Rs 1,03,195. Spot gold hit USD 3,500.33 per ounce. *—PTI*

## SBI Q1 profit rises 12 per cent to Rs 19,160 cr

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The SBI on Friday posted 12 per cent increase in standalone net profit at Rs 19,160 crore for the first quarter of this financial year.

The bank had earned a net profit of Rs 17,035 crore in the same quarter of previous fiscal year.

Total income rose to Rs 1,35,342 crore during June quarter 2025-26, from Rs 1,22,688 crore a year ago, The SBI has said in a regulatory filing.

Interest earned by the bank improved to Rs 1,17,996 crore, as compared to Rs 1,11,526 crore in June quarter FY25. Operating profit too increased to Rs 30,544 crore from Rs 26,449 crore.

On the asset quality front, the bank witnessed an improvement with gross non-performing assets declining to 1.83 per cent of gross advances at the end of June quarter, from 2.21 per cent a year ago. *—PTI*

## Rinfra to recover over Rs 21K cr in power dues

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Reliance Infrastructure on Friday said two of its subsidiaries – BSES Yamuna Power Ltd and BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd – will recover Rs 21,413 crore of power dues over the next four years after a Supreme Court ruling.

The two power distribution companies (discoms) supply electricity to 5.3 million households in Delhi.

RInfra said its subsidiaries will "recover Rs 21,413 crore of regulatory assets over 4 years", following a Supreme Court order that has set guidelines for the recovery of regulatory assets.

The Apex Court on Wednesday directed that the regulatory assets, including carrying costs to the tune of Rs 27,200.37 crore, to be paid within three years to Delhi's three private discoms.

The regulatory assets, essentially deferred revenue gaps to be recovered in future tariffs, have risen sharply, reaching Rs 12,993.53 crore for BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd, Rs 8,419.14 crore for BSES Yamuna Power Ltd and Rs 5,787.70 crore for Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd as on 31 March, 2024, totalling Rs 27,200.37 crore. *—PTI*

# Bharti Airtel promoter entity sells shares for ₹11,227 crore

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Indian Continent Investment Ltd, an entity promoted by billionaire Sunil Bharti Mittal, on Friday divested nearly one per cent stake in telecom carrier Bharti Airtel for Rs 11,227 crore through open market transactions. Indian Continent Investment Ltd is one of the promoters of Gurugram-based Bharti Airtel.

Indian Continent Investment Ltd offloaded a total of 6 crore equity shares in two tranches or a 0.98 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel. The shares were disposed of in the price range of Rs 1,870.40-1,871.95 apiece, taking the combined deal value to Rs 11,227.05 crore. Its holding in Bharti Airtel is down to 1.49 per cent from 2.47 per cent. The holding of promoters has reduced to 50.27 per cent from 51.25 per cent. Details of the buyers could not be ascertained on the exchange. Shares fell 3.28 per cent to close at Rs 1,859.50 apiece on NSE. *—PTI*

**PHD-LEVEL MODEL**

# *ChatGPT just got smarter with GPT 5*

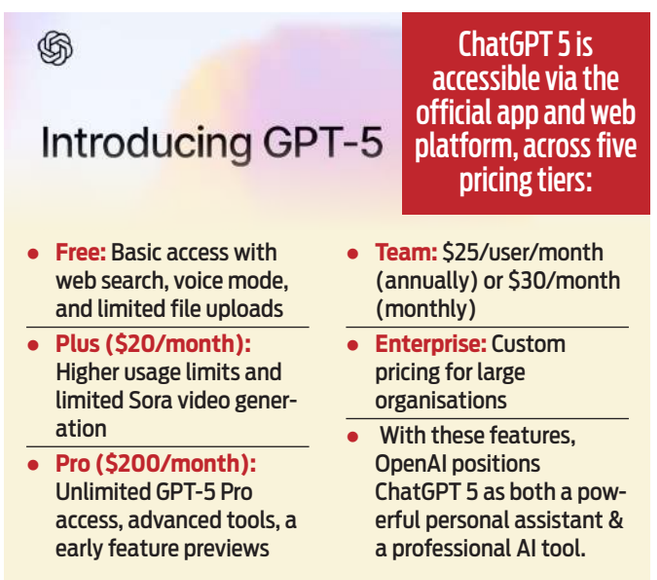
**SAN FRANCISCO, 8 AUG**

OpenAI has launched ChatGPT 5, its most powerful AI chatbot yet, offering a faster, smarter, and more intuitive experience. Built on the GPT-4o (omni) architecture, the model features enhanced reasoning, better context understanding, and seamless integration across voice, image, and real-time conversations.

Key upgrades include faster response times, improved emotional intelligence, and image interpretation, as well as the ability to hold natural voice conversations and personalise replies using memory (if enabled). A redesigned interface and new customisation options aim to improve usability. The model has been trained to avoid speculative responses, handle sensitive topics more responsibly, and reduce hallucinations — instances where AI fabricates facts. CEO Sam Altman noted the chatbot is now less deceptive and uses a method called safe completions for clearer, more reliable answers. GPT-5 is available in three variants: GPT-5, GPT-5 Mini, and GPT-5 Nano, tailored to different devices.*—Agencies*

**OpenAI is going to eat Microsoft alive**

-Elon Musk, Billionaire and owner of X


Introducing GPT-5
ChatGPT 5 is accessible via the official app and web platform, across five pricing tiers:
Free: Basic access with web search, voice mode, and limited file uploads
Plus ($20/month): Higher usage limits and limited Sora video generation
Pro ($200/month): Unlimited GPT-5 Pro access, advanced tools, a early feature previews
Team: $25/user/month (annually) or $30/month (monthly)
Enterprise: Custom pricing for large organisations
With these features, OpenAI positions ChatGPT 5 as both a powerful personal assistant & a professional AI tool.

## B'luru leads India's office leasing market

**BENGALURU, 8 AUG**

Bengaluru has emerged as the frontrunner in India's commercial office market, with record leasing activity pushing vacancy levels to a decade low, according to Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency (ICRA).

As of 30 June, the total Grade A office stock across the top six cities stood at approximately 1,030 msf, with Bengaluru commanding the largest share at 26 per cent, followed by Delhi-NCR with 19 per cent, stated a press release issued by ICRA on Friday. The IT hub is expected to see vacancy ease further from 9.8 per cent to 9.0–9.5 per cent in FY2026, said ICRA.

Chennai is expected to maintain stable vacancy levels at 9.0–9.5 per cent per cent with 5 million square feet (msf) of new additions. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## I dream of playing in World Cup and Olympics: Manisha

**GUWAHATI, 8 AUG**

Trailblazing Indian woman footballer Manisha Kalyan on Friday said she harbours the dream of playing in the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics, a belief that has been bolstered by the national team's qualification for the AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia next year. Manisha, the only Indian footballer to have played in the UEFA Champions League for women, was the cynosure of all eyes at the ASMITA under-13 league for girls at Nehru Stadium here on Friday. She said ASMITA is a "rare platform for young girls to realise their football dreams." "I am still dreaming of playing in the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics and after we qualified for the AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia next year, our belief has been bolstered," the 23-year-old Manisha told the eight teams taking part in the Guwahati leg of ASMITA. *—PTI*

## Conway's first test century in over 2 years boosts NZ

**BULAWAYO, 8 AUG**

Devon Conway overcame his patchy form in test cricket with his first hundred in over two years as New Zealand eyed an imposing lead against Zimbabwe in the second test on Friday.Conway moved to a flawless 153 on Day 2. Zimbabwe tried six bowlers in the session, but only Vincent Masekesa (1-45) got success when the leg-spinner dismissed night-watcher Jacob Duffy for 36.Resuming on 174-1 with a 49-run lead, New Zealand had another productive session of 132-1 as Conway led the charge with his fifth test century.*—PTI*

## BCCI invites tenders for player verification services

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

The BCCI has invited proposals for verification services for player registration and set 22 August as the last date to submit documents. "BCCI invites proposals from reputed entities to acquire the rights and obligations to provide services that entail the provision of verification services for player registration, through a tender process," the Board said in a media release. BCCI has issued the Request for Proposal (RFP), which provides the detailed terms and conditions governing the submission and evaluation of proposals. "The RFP will be made available on receipt of payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs one lakh plus any applicable Goods and Services Tax," the Board said.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@PCA

## Pakistan cricketer Haider Ali suspended

**MANCHESTER, 8 AUG**

Pakistan batsman Haider Ali is under criminal investigation in England, his country's cricket board said, while Greater Manchester Police said an arrest has been made following a rape allegation. The Pakistan Cricket Board said an investigation "involving cricketer Haider Ali" stemmed from "an incident that reportedly occurred during the Pakistan Shaheens' recent tour of England." The PCB did not specify the nature of the investigation into the 24-year-old Ali. Greater Manchester Police told The Associated Press that on Monday, they received a report of a rape and that "we have arrested a 24-year-old man."*—PTI*

# McGrath makes bold score line prediction for 2025 Ashes

### McGrath believes England will find it pretty tough

**LONDON, 8 AUG**

The Ashes is still over three months away, but pace legend Glenn McGrath on Friday is out with his much-awaited prediction for the upcoming edition: a 5-0 sweep for Australia.

The feisty showdown is slated to begin in Perth on 21 November, and McGrath believes England will find it "pretty tough" to battle past the likes of Pat Cummins and a rather poor record.

McGrath said his prediction this time is based on how England were held to a 2-2 series draw by India in the recent Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy. "It's very rare for me to make a prediction, isn't it? And I can't make a different one - 5-0," McGrath declared on 'BBC Radio'.

"I'm very confident with our team. When you've got Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, and Nathan Lyon firing in their home conditions, it's going to be pretty tough.

"Plus, that track record England have had, it'd be interesting to see if they can win a Test," he added. England, who are set to travel Down Under for the five-match series later this year, haven't won the Ashes since 2015.

Additionally, they have lost either 0-5 or 0-4 in all but one series in Australia since 2002-03. Their last Test win came in 2010-11 when they claimed a 3-1 series triumph.

Australia won 4-0 when England last toured the country in 2021-22, and Pat Cummins' side has only lost two of their past 15 Tests at home, winning 11 and drawing two. McGrath admitted that Australia's unsettled top three is an issue.

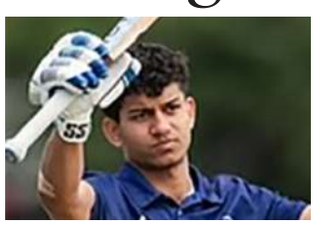
The likes of Usman Khawaja, Cameron Green, and Marnus Labuschagne are also out of form, while the young and sprightly Sam Konstas is yet to cement his spot as an opener.

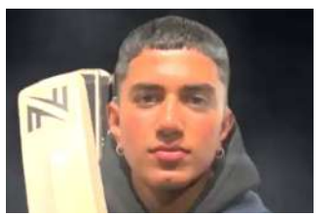
But with England's bowling attack also needing "to strengthen a little bit", McGrath feels the main battle will be to get the wickets of Joe Root and Harry Brook. "It's the top order or top and middle order of England against the Australian fast bowlers and Lyon. That's going to be a big match-up." *—PTI*

Glenn McGrath

## Australia names U-19 squad for home series against India

**MELBOURNE, 8 AUG**





Aryan Sharma and Yash Deshmukh were named in the Australia U19 squad

***PHOTO: PTI***

Two cricketers of Indian origin, Aryan Sharma and Yash Deshmukh, were on Friday named in Australia's 15-member squad for the upcoming home series against India Under-19 team next month.

While Sharma hails is a batter from Victoria, all-rounder Deshmukh is among five players from New South Wales picked in the squad, which will be coached by former Australia head coach Tim Nielsen.

The multi-format series will begin with three 50-over matches to be played on September 21, 24, and 26 at the Ian Healy Oval in Brisbane. It will be followed by two four-day matches scheduled from September 30 to October 3 in Brisbane and from October 7 to 10 in Mackay. The assignment will be Nielsen's first as in charge of the U-19 side. Nielsen previously coached the senior Australian men's team between 2007 and 2011.

"We're also thrilled to welcome Tim Nielsen as Head Coach of the National U19 squad. *—PTI*

**NATIONAL BANK OPEN**

# Ben rallies to beat Karen in Toronto final

**TORONTO, 8 AUG**

Ben Shelton won the National Bank Open for the third and biggest title of his young career, rallying to beat 11th-seeded Karen Khachanov of Russia 6-7 (5), 6-4, 7-6 (3).

The 22-year-old Shelton, seeded fourth, became the first American winner in the Masters 1000 hard-court event since Andy Roddick in 2003. Shelton also won on hard courts in Tokyo in 2023 and on clay in Houston last year. "It's a surreal feeling," Shelton said. "It's been a long week, not an easy path to the final. My best tennis came out when it mattered most. I was clutch, I persevered, I was resilient. All the qualities I like to see in myself."

Shelton will move up a spot to a career-high sixth in the world. He beat Khachanov a night after topping second-seeded Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-3 in an all-American semifinal match. Julian Cash and Lloyd Glasspool won the all-English doubles final, saving four match points in a 6-3, 6-7 (5), 13-11 victory over Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski. The second-seeded Wimbledon champions have won 19 straight matches.

Ben Shelton

**VICTORIA MBOKO OUTLASTS NAOMI OSAKA**

Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko conquered four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka 2-6, 6-4, 6-1 on Friday, capping a fairytale run at the WTA Canadian Open with her first WTA title. Mboko, 18 and playing in her first WTA final, denied Osaka her first tour-level title since the 2021 Australian Open, wearing down the Japanese star, 27, who has struggled to find consistency since returning from maternity leave early in 2024. Mboko, who was ranked outside the top 300 to start the season and had climbed to 85th entering the week, is now projected to rise to 34th in the world.

Before an ecstatic center-court crowd of 11,000, she converted eight of her nine break points, seizing her fourth win of the week over a Grand Slam winner. *—PTI*

**SPORTING A NEW LOOK**

Virat Kohli was recently spotted in London sporting a new look

***PHOTO: X/© INSTAGRAM***

## ISL urges AIFF to bring current situation to SC's attention

**NEW DELHI, 8 AUG**

Eleven Indian Super League clubs on Friday urged the AIFF to urgently bring the "current situation" of Indian football arising out of the uncertainty over ISL's future to the attention of the Supreme Court, before which a case relating to the constitution of the national federation is pending.

The ISL clubs, in a letter, said that they will have no option but to seek judicial recourse independently if the All India Football Federation does not act on their request. Out of the 13 ISL clubs, Mohun Bagan Super Giant and East Bengal did not sign the letter.

The development came a day after the AIFF proposed the Super Cup in September to ensure sufficient competitive matches for the clubs after ISL organisers FSDL put a "pause" on the league due to uncertainty over the renewal of the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) it signed with the national federation in 2010.

Following a directive from the Supreme Court, the AIFF has been asked not to negotiate new terms of the MRA (with FSDL) until a final judgment is delivered in the AIFF draft constitution case. *—PTI*

## Gaurav Gill eyeing his fourth APRC title

**MEDAN, 8 AUG**

Gaurav Gill once loved sending down booming serves on the tennis court, but as years went by, zooming cars down the treacherous tracks became a passion for India's most decorated rally driver, who is a bona fide Asia Pacific Rally Championship legend.

Returning to the APRC circuit after seven years, Gill must have had a feeling of deja vu, having won his maiden round at this very country at Makassar 17 years back in 2008.Gill will start as a favourite while the combo of Team JK Tyre and Vamcy Merla Motorsports unleashes a formidable five-car challenge at the event.Gill has teamed up with his French co-driver, Florian Barral. *—PTI*

## Aston Villa signs forward Evann Guessand from French club Nice

**BIRMINGHAM, 8 AUG**

Evann Guessand, centre, pictured after signing for Aston Villa

***PHOTO:X/ @AVFCOFFICIAL***

Aston Villa made its first major signing of the summer by landing Ivory Coast forward Evann Guessand from French club Nice for a reported fee of at least 30 million euros ($35 million) on Friday.

The 24-year-old Guessand scored 13 goals in total last season, playing mainly as a winger, and was named Nice's player of the La Liga season. Villa described him as "a versatile operator capable of playing across the front line." Neither team disclosed financial terms. The deal reportedly includes another 5 million euros in potential add-ons."This club is special," Guessand said in Villa's announcement. "History, pride, passion, the belief. When I heard the club wanted me, I didn't think twice."Nice issued a statement hailing the French-born Guessand as a "model of resilience." He rose through the team's youth system and made his first-team debut in January 2020. *—PTI*

## KEYMER ATTAINS SOLO LEAD; ERIGAISI SETTLES FOR A DRAW

**CHENNAI, 6 JUNE**

Germany's Vincent Keymer overcame a stiff challenge from India's Pranav V in the second round to attain a solo lead of the Chennai Grand Masters 2025 here on Friday.

Pravav stood firm against the higher-rated Keymer with white pieces in the early stages of their matchup.A clever mid-game knight manoeuvre helped Pranav capture a black rook and push Keymer onto the defensive.

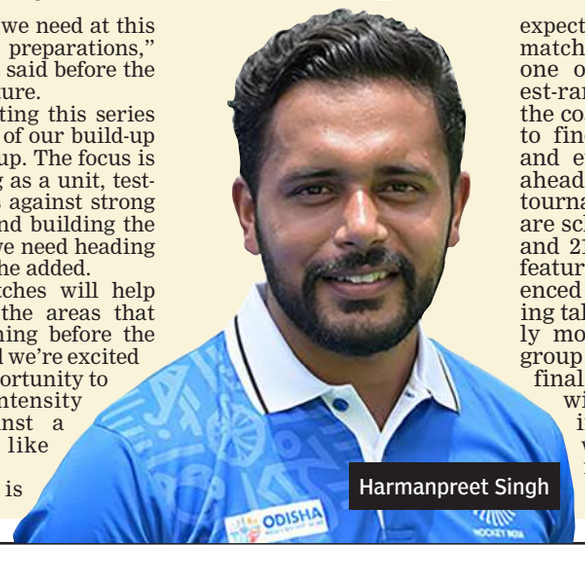
The German GM guarded his position resolutely to ensure he didn't fall further back.As the game progressed, Keymer snatched the advantage back, courtesy of a marauding knight run, and eventually sealed his second win on the trot. Top seed Arjun Erigaisi and Dutch GM Jorden van Foreest settled for a draw after an evenly matched battle. The Indian GM is now joint-second in the standings, with 1.5 points, along with the USA's Ray Robson, who beat Vidit Gujrathi in a dramatic encounter.

Erigaisi and van Foreest traded inaccurate moves in the opening phase before exchanging queens after move 20. The encounter proceeded into a double rook endgame before Erigaisi pressed for a draw with a three-fold repetition, which was accepted by van Foreest. *—PTI*

**HARMANPREET'S TAKE**

## *'Aus series key to Asia Cup build-up'*

**BENGALURU, 8 AUG**



Harmanpreet Singh

Captain Harmanpreet Singh on Friday said that facing the formidable Australian team on their home turf will help the Indian men's hockey team identify key areas for improvement ahead of this month's Asia Cup, which also serves as a World Cup qualifier.

The Indian team departed in the early hours for Australia, where they will play a crucial four-match series against the hosts at Perth Hockey Stadium from August 15 to 21.

"Playing Australia in their home conditions is always a great challenge, and that's exactly what we need at this stage of our preparations," Harmanpreet said before the team's departure.

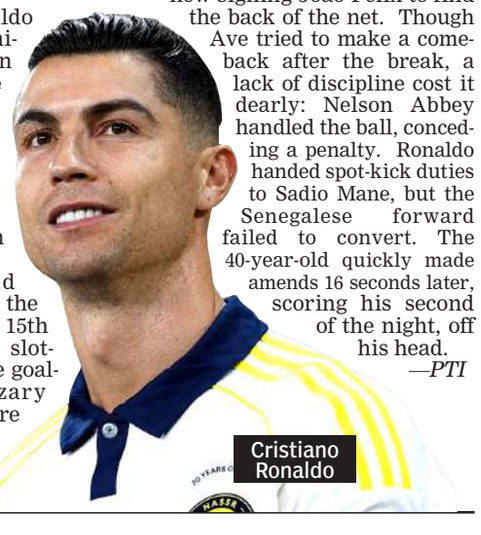
"We're treating this series as a key part of our build-up to the Asia Cup. The focus is on improving as a unit, testing ourselves against strong opposition, and building the momentum we need heading into Rajgir," he added.

"These matches will help us pinpoint the areas that need sharpening before the Asia Cup, and we're excited about the opportunity to play high-intensity hockey against a top side like Australia."

The tour is expected to offer valuable match exposure against one of the world's highest-ranked teams, giving the coaching staff a chance to fine-tune combinations and evaluate player form ahead of the continental tournament. The matches are scheduled for 15, 16, 19, and 21 August. The squad features a blend of experienced players and emerging talent and will be closely monitored as the final group for the Asia Cup is finalised. The Asia Cup will begin on 29 August in Rajgir, with the winner of the tournament earning a direct berth. *—PTI*

## Ronaldo scores hat-trick in Portugal as Al Nassr wins

**DUBAI, 8 AUG**



Cristiano Ronaldo

Cristiano Ronaldo celebrated a dominant pre-season performance with a hat-trick, leading Al Nassr to a 4-0 victory over Rio Ave at the Estádio do Algarve in Portugal on Thursday. Mohamed Simakan opened the scoring in the 15th minute, calmly slotting past Rio Ave goalkeeper Cezary Miszta. Just before half-time, Ronaldo doubled the lead, combining brilliantly with new signing João Félix to find the back of the net. Though Ave tried to make a comeback after the break, a lack of discipline cost it dearly: Nelson Abbey handled the ball, conceding a penalty. Ronaldo handed spot-kick duties to Sadio Mane, but the Senegalese forward failed to convert. The 40-year-old quickly made amends 16 seconds later, scoring his second of the night, off his head. *—PTI*